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THE  
*Clifton Tales and Narratives.*



VOLUME I.

LONDON:

BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET,  
AND 63 PATERNOSTER ROW.  
SPAIN, PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

1854.

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LONDON:  
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Great New Street and Fetter Lane.

## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THESE "Tales and Narratives" are an extension of the idea with which the Editors commenced the "Entertaining and Instructive Library," which formed one of the departments of the "Clifton Tracts." They are published, like the latter, in connexion with the Brotherhood of St. Vincent of Paul, and are placed under his particular patronage.

A new Number will continue to appear every other month.

A theological error having been inadvertently allowed to remain at page 23 of "Lucy Ward," the leaf has been cancelled, and the error rectified in the present volume. Purchasers of uncorrected copies may obtain the amended leaf *gratis* on application to the Publishers.

*Clifton; Advent, 1853.*

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**"An immortal and redeemed soul; take care of that for which  
Jesus Christ died."—p. 22.**

J O E   B A K E R ;

OR,

The One Church.



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## JOE BAKER;

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## The One Church.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE CHILD AND THE MAN.

**W**HEN a man tells the story of his life, he begins commonly with some account of his father and mother, and with the date of his birth. But this I can't do. I wish to tell a story, but I never knew my parents; I can only guess that I am about fifty years of age; and when, how, or by whom my name of Joseph was given to me, I cannot tell. The first thing I can recollect is, being one of many small children, clad in a canvas garment, allowed to play in a yard, and fed on oatmeal, bread, and potatoes. It was said that we "*belonged to the parish.*" I have nothing to say of kindness or unkindness; we belonged to the parish, and as such were treated as little animals, and were kept alive. We never learnt any thing. As I have since found

out that I am able to learn, I can only suppose that we were never taught any thing.

From time to time those who could work were sent away ; but still young children were brought in, and the house and play-yard were kept tolerably full.

I remember a man coming and looking at several of us, and not seeming satisfied about something. At last he said, "How old is that one?" pointing at me.

"About ten, I fancy," was the answer.

"Come here, young boy. What's your name?"

"Joe," I answered.

"Your surname also?"

"What's a surname?" I asked.

"Oh ! well, never mind ; I'll give you one. Will you live with me?"

"What's living with you?" I asked.

The man laughed, and went away. I went away too. Shortly I was told that I was to live with this man ; I had a suit of clothes given to me, and was sent in a cart to a large village about four miles from the town in which I had till then spent my life.

My master kept a bakehouse. For the first two years I did any thing : I ran on messages ; I carried pies and puddings ; I chopped wood and fetched faggots ; I had plenty of good food, and hard blows and hard words besides. But I was very happy in a boyish way ; grew fast, was strong, hearty, and merry ; and I obtained a *surname*, for the people in the village called me Joe Baker.

Also I obtained a friend ; and in obtaining a friend, I found out that I had a heart. For this

friend I could be generous and self-denying ; to this friend I could give a better seat than my own by the fire. I could rise from my bed at night to let him in. I could divide my supper with him if he had not had any ; and I could suffer silently for an accident of which he had been the cause.

He taught me that I had a heart ; he taught me that which I had never learnt before. And this friend was a large dog called Lion. He was very fierce ; but my child's hand could chain him up. His bark was terrible ; but my child's voice could turn it to a loving tender whine. And sometimes, when a stranger came after the dog had been unchained, that he might watch the premises through the night, my small child's arm was the only thing that kept the fierce animal from fastening his fangs upon him ; and when the frightened visitor had made a hasty departure, I would fling my arms round Lion's neck, and with one word turn his anger into frolic, and roll with him in loving play upon the ground.

And then sometimes I would stand up, and look upon that dog, and know that he was fierce and strong, and feel that I was but a little child, and a thought would come into my head that *it was something to be a man*; that there was something within me of *strength and power and will*; that I—I Joe Baker—had something about me which distinguished me from the brutes, and that the moon and stars looking down upon me must see that I was something which the brutes were not.

And so I first learnt that I had a soul, and that God made the soul of man after His own likeness. But I could not have put my feelings then into

these words ; for I had never heard of the soul except as a part of a man which my master was constantly swearing at. And I did not know who had made man, or any thing about creation or redemption, or heaven or hell. My only knowledge of such things, if such can be called knowledge, was from the language of cursing and swearing, with which I was perfectly familiar.

I was very busy "carrying" on Sundays, and generally had to sit up the greater part of Saturday night. But we had a good pie always for dinner, and I had a glass of beer; and in the evening my master's wife was always dressed in her best, and sometimes there were friends to tea, and sometimes I knew that she went to chapel ; and I had generally an hour or two of holiday in the evening or towards night, and I spent it with such boys as myself. And so life went on for two years, when my master said that I was good and clever, and he had me taught to read and write. Thus four more years passed away : I was sixteen — a fine young man, people said. I read, wrote, and ciphered pretty well ; I was very fond of learning. My master had got on in the world : he baked for some country families, and now kept a horse and cart. I had learnt the business and worked hard, and thought a good deal of myself. Still time went on. I was doing just the same at twenty-one years of age, only I received good wages, and I helped to keep the books, and wrote out the bills for the gentry, as I could write a more fashionable-looking hand than my master.

I don't suppose that any body will expect that I can say, with any truth, that I lived according

to the precepts of the Gospel. I was no worse than my neighbours,—perhaps a little better than my neighbours; because I was getting on in the world, and we had a respectable connection in our trade, and the world we served expected us to be like decent people. My mistress had had a seizure, and was a great invalid; my master, grown old, and being in easy circumstances, was getting idle, and had turned to good eating, and drank more than was right for him—not in public-houses, but at home at night by the fire, with his newspaper. I had all the management of the business, and was my own master, and ruled the old couple besides.

At last, one day my poor old mistress died. She went out of life as she sat in her chair—just as you would blow out a candle, it seemed; and nobody cared more about it. Master drank more spirits and water, and took it stronger, and was in a hurry to get the dead out of the house. I, too, was glad to have the funeral over; for I had always carried myself “above religion,” always treated it as an unmanly thing, fit for women and children only, and I found the corpse a very uncomfortable sight. Where was the old woman? That senseless flesh *was* her, and yet it *wasn’t* her. Sometimes I started in my work, almost thinking she might be by my side—come back to tell me something; for I, who as a little child had restrained the big dog, still felt that man was better than the beasts, and that there *was that* within him which would never die.

Sometimes people came in to see the corpse; sometimes they made remarks. One said, “that she had lived and died without God; that she had

worshipped nothing but money; that 'twas an awful sight to see the remains of such as she was.' Then I spoke angrily, and bade them hold their tongues, and not judge a woman who was better than themselves. Then others came, and said they remembered the day, twenty years and more ago, when she had been converted; and that grace was never lost, and that such would be saved in spite of works, and that she was "gone to glory." Then I would be more angry still, and yet laugh at them, and say, that if "glory" was to be earned so cheap, it was not worth having; and so sent them away. And then the old woman was buried.





## CHAPTER II.

### RELIGION AND MATRIMONY.

ND so, reader, I grew up to between twenty-two and twenty-three years of age; and I knew nothing of religion. I call it nothing; yet I must tell a little of what that word "nothing" means in this place. I knew that a beautiful pile of building, with a great yew-tree near it, in the midst of the graves, was the parish church; that in the neat house close by lived a gentleman with white hair, called the clergyman, to whom we paid our tithes; and in this church were pulpit and desks, occupied by this gentleman and the clerk; and a gallery where I sat about once a month, when I had time to go to church: for our customers being, many of them, among the gentry, they went to church, and we went where they went. Also I had a very good voice, and was very fond of singing, and had been asked to sing there. So I knew the church, and knew that I had a beautiful voice, and knew that I sung in the gallery of that old building; and there my church knowledge ended.

I knew also that there was an Independent meeting-house, and a Methodist meeting-house,

and a Quaker's meeting-house, and a Unitarian meeting-house, and a Baptist meeting-house. I knew that the Methodists without bows abhorred the Quakers without buttons, and were scandalised both at the Quakers for not baptising at all, and at the Baptists for adult immersion in large baths with dressing-gowns on. I knew that the Unitarians had deeper abhorrence of Baptists, Methodists, and Quakers, than they of each other ; and I also knew that on occasions they all made common cause against that venerable old building in the churchyard, which—remember, I sung in it!—I thought decidedly impertinent.

And this was all I knew about religion: surely I may call it nothing, for they disputed about every thing. There was not one thing in religion which these people could agree upon as being true. Yet, when any of these people died, not having burial-grounds of their own, they were buried in the parish churchyard; and the white-haired clergyman pronounced over each one that was lowered there into the grave, that he was a "dear brother," buried in "sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life." And again I say, that with all this around me I knew nothing of religion, and I cared nothing for it ; and I did not believe that any body cared or knew more than myself.

The old mistress was buried ; and I said to my master, "I have a great mind to bring home a wife, for we shall never manage with only a woman-servant here." He said, "Do, Joe, do;" so the thing was settled. There had come into our neighbourhood, about two years before, a family of some consequence, and I had regularly driven to their

house twice a week with bread. They paid for their bread weekly; and I used to sit in the kitchen while the book was looked at before I settled it. I made up my mind to marry Fanny, the cook belonging to that house. We had had very little to say to each other ; but I had no desire to marry any girl in our village. I looked upon them all as mere triflers at best. I knew that we men had made them so; but I thought that I was getting on in the world, and I could not marry one of them. No; I must marry Fanny Cowper, the cook at Hill Grove.

I must be honest, and tell you that I had never thought seriously of matrimony till this moment. I had been what people call "attentive" to many, but not once had I thought of marriage. It was a solemn kind of feeling now; but my thoughts had turned to Fanny the moment my old master had said, "Do, Joe, do;" and so to Fanny I would go. I had served Hill Grove for two years, and for two years I had seen Fanny. I had never paid *her* any of those attentions which I had paid to so many others, and she had never bestowed more than common civility on me. But ever since the first time I saw her, I had been sure that she was no common woman. I think she was a few months older than me; but her manner was so steady, that she perhaps seemed to be older than she was. She was a plain dresser, but so very neat and clean: no matter what she was doing, she had always that steady, neat, cheerful, civil way with her, that I could not but admire her; and I could not help trying to behave well, and to say the most proper things I could think of in her presence. This did not

lower me, but raised me in my own estimation, and made me think that I should grow into a superior kind of man, if I could always keep in the company of such women as Fanny Cowper. I observed every thing she did, and saw her tidy ways, and how she saved the ends of loaves and other bits of bread, and put them out tidily for dinner or luncheon, and did *not* put cold pudding and bread and bits of meat all on a dish together for her fellow-servants to pick from with their fingers, as I had seen done for luncheons in other large kitchens. A place for every thing and every thing in its place—things put away the moment they were done with—a busy place, and yet no fuss or hurry, but steady, thoughtful, managing, pleasant ways; and Fanny so clean, so smiling, so cheerful, with her sweet-voiced welcome, and a way with her that made her plain “Please sit down, sir,” better than a fine compliment from any body else. Yet Fanny was never more than plainly civil to me. Of all the young women I had ever spoken to, Fanny seemed to care least for me; and yet I had determined that this Fanny must be my wife, and of course I knew that she would.

I settled things with the master. He had made a good deal of money. He did not want to take any more trouble about the business. He would give every thing up to me, only he was to live in the house and be waited upon, and to have a certain proportion out of the profits of the business. He behaved with liberality, and I felt myself a rich man; so I dressed myself with a little more attention than usual, and took the book to Hill Grove to be settled.

"My mistress isn't in," said Fanny; "would you leave your book, and the money can be sent to-morrow?"

I said, "The money could stay till the next time the bread was delivered." I loitered.

"Will you rest a minute, sir?" said Fanny.

I sat down; I felt my heart knocking loudly against my ribs. I—I who had made foolish love to so many foolish girls; I, who had never met with any thing but encouragement; I, who then felt sure of being accepted, for I knew how good a home I had to offer; I felt so nervous that all my voice went away from me. "You've a very cheerful, pleasant kitchen," said I at last, when I was again able to speak.

"Very," replied Fanny, giving a smile all round the room, which would have made a dungeon pleasant.

"Do you know our house?" I asked.

"Well, I never was inside; but I know it outside well enough of course."

"I have arranged with master to take the business. The bills will be made out in future in my name. Fanny, I can't get on without a wife; Fanny—will you"—I saw her get very red all up her face and forehead. I got up, but I absolutely did not dare go near her. I had that wonderful respect for this one woman in the world, that I could not approach her till some word or smile had given me leave. But I stood up and spoke bravely, for there was something saying at my heart that Fanny was well—oh, well worth winning. "Will you marry me?" said I.

She looked round upon me, and I saw her

tremble; and the face, so blushing just before, was getting very pale. "Dear Fanny, will you marry me?" said I once more.

"No!" said Fanny, very softly; and then "no" again, gathering strength; and once more, "Oh, no—no, Joe Baker; but I'm sure I hope you'll get a wife to your liking, and be very happy; but it can't be me."

I really was ready to drop down, I was so cruelly disappointed. There was something so remarkable in her way of refusing me, that I knew there was no hope; and at that moment I so loved and admired and respected her—and I can't help saying, that I think I had *never respected a woman before*,—I so respected her, that I thought my heart would break if I could not win her.

"Why not, Fanny; oh, why not?" said I.

"Listen, Joe," she said. "I would not marry a Protestant man if he were a duke—I would rather beg my bread. I am a Catholic. I say, I would rather wander a lone woman all over the earth, and beg my bread." And she made a rapid motion with her hands; I did not then know that it was the sign of the cross. "Holy Mother," she said, "pray for me, that I may never love any but a child of thine."

"But," said I, "suppose you are a Catholic, what's that to me?"

She looked up at me with a smile, almost a laugh. "Why, nothing, Joe; nothing to you, I dare say. But that is not the question; it is *I* who won't marry any man who is not of my own religion."

"I don't care at all what religion I am of," said

I. "Indeed, I should like to know something of religion before I die; why can't I be as you are?" There was a pause. "Will you answer me one question?" said I.

"Yes."

"If I were a Catholic, would you accept me?"

"Yes," said Fanny.

"And now what is it to be a Catholic?" I asked.

"It is," said Fanny, "to be a member of that Church which was founded by my Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; of which the Apostles were the first priests and bishops, and St. Peter the head."

"But those men are all dead and gone," said I.

"They still live in their successors," said Fanny. "Our bishops and priests are their successors by the sacrament of orders, and our popes are the successors of St. Peter; and Jesus, true God and true man, keeps and sustains this Church; and all true Christians belong to it, and in it find strength, and joy, and peace, and salvation."

"But how am I to enter this Church?"

"By repentance," said Fanny. "If you desire to save your soul, you will hate sin, and repent of all the sin you have committed, and determine to amend. And God has given to His priests the power to forgive sins in the sacrament of penance; and then you must confess your sins; and you must receive the priest's instructions; and you must believe the teaching of the Church."

I think that if Fanny had cast thunder and lightning about her in that kitchen, I could not have felt more astonished and bewildered than I

then felt. I saw, indeed, that there was a great gulf between her and me. But to talk to me of repentance, of forgiveness of sins, of confession, of amendment of life, of the teaching of the Church, of a Church sustained by God Himself—which had come down straight from the Apostles, which was the same Church as that then founded, which was to continue, and to which all Christians must belong—these were views of the One Fold, the One Lord, and the One Baptism, which I could not comprehend; and yet some words came to my mind, words I had heard from my singing-place in the gallery in church, and I said them out loud, in a stupid way which I well recollect, “I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins;” and there I stopped, and fixed my eyes on Fanny.

“ You don’t believe in any of it,” she said. “ In your mouth those words have no meaning.”

“ Look here, Fanny,” I said. “ I can’t understand one word about it, no more than if it were Hebrew or Greek. You shall teach me by and by; marry me now, and teach me by and by.”

“ I would rather beg my bread,” she said again. “ And now go away, Joe Baker: you must stay here no longer. There, go away, pray do; good bye. We are never going to talk of this any more: good bye.”

There was a manner about her that I could not help obeying; so I left the kitchen and the house, and proceeded towards the village.

As I went home, bitterly distressed, I saw, coming through a field that I was crossing, a girl I had long known, called Ellen Maple. She came

towards me when I called to her. We had not more than two minutes' talk together, and then walked very fast towards the village, and never stopped till we were near the church. Then she stopped in a small street, and I went to the clergyman's house. I was soon out again.

"Ellen!"

"Yes, Joe."

"'Tis done!"

"Done? Really—truly?"

"We'll be married Monday fortnight."

I don't think Ellen believed it till the banns were called the next Sunday. But it was true; and we were married on the Monday fortnight as I said.

I believe that people were a little surprised at our marriage—I am sure we were ourselves! There were jokes and wonderings enough; and I was so strange, that people said they could not make me out. Sometimes I received a joke with good temper; sometimes I called the joker to order, shook my fist in his face, and threatened to turn him out of the shop. No one understood me; and I am sure I did not understand myself. I was vexed at the thought of marrying Ellen Maple. It was a bad match for me. But the only woman I had ever *respected* would not have me; and I knew that Ellen—light-headed as she had been called—had once loved me, and did still love me; and so, of all the girls in our village, I chose to marry her.

Her father was a journeyman-tailor, an over-worked and yet an idle man. He was a very hard drinker,—a man who would be drunk day and night for a week together. Of course the children had all been ill brought up, or rather they had

no bringing up at all. They grew, and lay about; and fed upon roast-beef and plum-pudding one week, and starved till they were thankful for a mouldy crust the next. Of this promising family Ellen was the eldest. Poor Ellen ! I had known her from a child. I believe that she spent the first halfpence she ever earned in an artificial flower for her cap, and that she would have gone without her most necessary winter garments rather than not have that black feather in her drawn silk bonnet. Poor Ellen ! And she did all this to attract the smiles, and saucy jokes, and rude admiration of us young men. And when she got them, she went home, proud, gratified, flattered, and happy. Poor Ellen ! I say again. She had never been taught to seek for something higher and better, and *more* gratifying and *more* satisfying, because it is holy and true. She had never been led among those paths where pure joys are to be found.

You see, then, that I was not behaving like a happy bridegroom, because I really had no respect for my wife or her relations. I wanted a woman in the house, and that I was going to have. And as to Ellen carrying on any of her old vanities—oh, I would take care of that. The thought crossed my mind, that I might have trouble with her; but I glanced at a stick in the corner, and muttered to myself through my teeth, that I was “not going to stand any nonsense from her.” And of this I am sure, that I was just the man, in my pride, my prosperity, my determination, and with my cold, callous heart, to have beaten her, or *killed her*, if she had striven against me.

But now in justice I must say, that with all my advantages, and notwithstanding all my pride in myself, Ellen was, at that very time, a far better creature than I was. There was in her that excellent thing, a woman's devotion of heart. Just as her poor, tattered, untidy, half-dressed, sickly, worn-out mother would work all night long, by the light of a farthing candle, to finish the tailor's jobs which her husband had left undone that he might stay at the public-house till he was too drunk to see—just as that woman had worked a thousand times for her starving children, and taken blows and bad words for payment, and never made any reply,—so Ellen would have worked for me, I'm sure; and I am ashamed to think that when I married I felt so foolishly above her, and treated her with so little tenderness.

I told Ellen not to buy any clothes; that I must have her as *I* liked, and that I should buy her gowns and bonnets and shawls myself. I saw it mortified her, but I didn't care. When her mother came to see me, I cut the visit very short, said that I was going to take Ellen, and that she need not trouble herself about any thing—I was one who liked my own way. And when the father came to the bakehouse one night, I took him by the shoulders and put him out into the street, laughing all the time, and bidding him stop at home till I invited him.

When the appointed day came, I met Ellen at the church-door. Her mother was with her, and my old master was with me. In that private way we were married, and I took Ellen home to the bakehouse. It was one of my perverse ways, that

I would not see my friends about me, or do as others do, on my wedding-day. I sent a piece of beef, some large currant-cakes, some beer, and a bottle or two of spirits, to Ellen's old home; but at her new home all was quiet enough. She sat on one side of the fire, and I on the other side: I think we both felt surprised that things had come to that. And the old master sat dozing, drinking, and reading by turns between us.

Ellen was decidedly a pretty girl. I had dressed her just as I thought that Fanny might have been dressed for such an occasion; and there, as I sat by the fire, I wondered what made Fanny so different from other young women, and if Ellen would ever become at all like her.

Ellen did the work of the house very well, and *Ellen loved me*; ungrateful, proud, and ignorant as I was, Ellen loved me. I never can be too thankful for it; for if she had not loved me, I think that my cold, half-scornful treatment of her must have made her desperate.

Just as the first year of our married life was out, I had a daughter born to me. I had never known my own parents; and now to be a father! There was something so sweet and wonderful in it. I was really happy; and I kissed Ellen with greater tenderness than I ever felt in my life before. And how her first words sank into my heart: "Joe, we will take care of this little thing, won't we?"

"Take care of it! Yes, Ellen;" and I kissed her and the baby again and again. "Take care of the little darling! Yes, Ellen, yes—won't we? Ah, that we will!"

All went on well. We took the child to church

to be christened, and called her Elizabeth. Two great events happened in the first year of the child's life. My old master died; and the white-haired clergyman died, whom I had known from a boy.

I made an arrangement with my master's heirs to take the property which belonged to him at a valuation, and to pay the sum by instalments half-yearly. I thus became entirely in possession of a very prosperous business, and felt very satisfied about it. And so I was both married and settled.





## CHAPTER III.

### A STRANGER SPEAKS THE TRUTH.

F course I did not lose sight of Fanny Cowper. I used to see her just as before, always pleasant in manner, respectable in appearance, perfect in her work, and gentle and kind, quiet and cheerful; and still I had never seen any person fit to be compared with Fanny Cowper. She never, in the most distant way, alluded to what had passed between us; and I should never have dared to refer to it: for I felt, somehow or other, that to have made any such allusion would not be respectful to Fanny; and there was that about her that *obliged* one to be respectful to her. When my child was born, the servants at Hill Grove congratulated me; and Fanny said, very sweetly, that she hoped the child would be a blessing to its parents. A kind wish from Fanny seemed to be as good as a gift to the child; and I was so pleased that I spoke out, and said what a pleasure the infant was to me, and that it was a great happiness to be a father.

The other servants laughed, kindly enough, but not understanding the depth of my feelings; Fanny, I saw, understood me exactly. Her eyes sparkled

when I spoke so openly. "Take care of it, Baker," she said; "take care of the dear creature. Remember it has an immortal—an immortal, a redeemed soul; take care of that for which Jesus Christ died."

"Step in and see the child and Ellen; I wish you would," said I; and I spoke very earnestly.

"Why, Baker, I seldom go out; and when I do ask for a holiday, it is generally a whole day, for my visits are to Monkton; so I don't ask to go any where else, for fear of putting the family to inconvenience. They are very kind to me."

There were several servants in the kitchen when Fanny said this.

"Oh, you are too good a cook to get into disgrace here," said the butler, with a knowing nod.

"Nobody finds fault with Fanny," said the footman; "only with her religion."

"And if there's any good in me, it's because of my religion," said Fanny.

"Did you know our Fanny was a Catholic?" said the housemaid to me.

"Why, yes," said I, "I did know it."

"Who told you?" she asked again.

"I told him myself," said Fanny, "a year ago, I should think, in this kitchen; and it's no secret; I am not always talking about it; but you know that I never make a secret of it—I have never been driven to make a secret of it, and I thank God for it."

I rose to go, and admired Fanny all the more for not having told any one of my making her an offer.

Still thinking of Fanny Cowper's superiority, I got home. There was my wife with my beloved

child in her arms. I embraced them both. The tears would often come into Ellen's eyes when she looked at her child, and when she saw how much I loved it. I took the infant from her; and as I pressed it to my heart, I repeated Fanny's words, "An immortal and a redeemed soul; take care of that for which Jesus Christ died!"

"Mercy on me, Joe! what words are those?" said Ellen.

"You don't like them?"

"I like them dearly. But from *you*, Joe; you never took any notice of any body that was religious."

"Did I ever see any body that was religious? Do you think the people in this village religious? In fact, Ellen, I don't believe that we, either of us, know what being religious means."

"It means taking care of our souls," said Ellen; "we have souls!"

"Yes, I'm sure we have—I feel that," said I.

"And to take care of our souls is not to stain them with sin," she went on. "My dear Joe, we have seen and done sin enough; but this babe's soul—let that be saved. I wish I might never see her worse than she is now."

We seemed better and happier for these few words; and I think that not a day passed but I said to myself, as I looked at the baby, "*An immortal soul, for which Jesus Christ died.*" About this time we had a visit from our new clergyman. He was a young man, so fresh and hearty-looking, with bright complexion and black hair, and one of the most active men I ever saw. He went about the parish, putting people's names

down in a book, and asking questions, and setting down the answers. As he entered our house, there stood by his side, and entered with him, a wayfaring man, with a bundle tied to a stick across his shoulder. Mr. Knight, the clergyman, was a very civil gentleman; he made way for the traveller, and said with a smile, "If you're on business, *I* can wait."

"Thank you, sir; I only want to make an inquiry, and I thought a baker's shop a good place to make it in. Do you know a young woman about here, a cook in some gentleman's family, called Fanny Cowper?"

"Yes, I do," I said. Now I had a curiosity to know as much of Fanny as I could; so I said to the man, "She's very well, and I'll tell you about her directly; please to sit down, and take a little refreshment for her sake, for she's rather a friend of mine." So the man sat down, and I turned to Mr. Knight.

"You're a Churchman?" says Mr. Knight.

"I sing in the gallery sometimes, sir. My business keeps me a good deal at home."

Mr. Knight wrote down in his book that I was a Churchman.

"And your wife?"

"Well, sir, nothing particular, I suppose."

He shook his head, but smiled.

"And your child—more than one?"

"Only one, sir."

"Baptised?"

"Christened Elizabeth, sir."

He looked at the baby, and played with it, and said it was a pretty little thing.

"And where were you baptised?" he said to Ellen.

"Well, sir, I can't say for certain; but I think mother took me to the Methodists."

"Methodists!" he repeated, rather sternly: "there is but *one Church!*"

"Really, sir, I don't know," said Ellen, innocently; "I'm no scholar."

"There is but *one Church,*" said Mr. Knight; "and if you were not brought to her as a child, it is your duty to come to her now."

The traveller advanced a few steps into the room, and I saw by his face that he was full of interest in what was saying. He had laid down his stick and bundle, and there he stood in his loose fustian coat and miry boots and trousers, with his eyes wandering from my wife to the clergyman, and evidently longing to hear what was coming next.

"There is only *one Church,*" said Mr. Knight again, and addressing Ellen, "and it is your duty to belong to her."

"Most true!" said the traveller.

Mr. Knight gave a sharp, suspicious glance towards the man, and then went on speaking very slowly, and in a very positive way.

"God," he said, "had not left His truth to chance to be spread over the earth. Salvation was His gift to men, and He had appointed the means by which it was to be spread. The Church is God's means for man's salvation; and there is but one Church, and it is your duty to belong to her."

"That's very good doctrine, as far as the words

go," said the traveller to me; and then turning a very smiling face on Mr. Knight, he went on, "and truly, sir, there *is* but one Church."

The words I had once said to Fanny came to my mind, and I thought it a proper moment for saying them again; so I repeated, "*I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church.*"

"Better and better!" exclaimed the stranger. Mr. Knight looked vexed.

"You are quite right, Baker," he said; "keep to that—that is the truth."

"And what do you belong to, sir?" asked the stranger.

"To the Church," said Mr. Knight.

"The Roman Catholic Church, sir?"

"No, to the English Church."

"Do you mean to say that the Roman Church is *not* a Church?"

"I do *not* mean to say that. The Roman Church is a Church, but a corrupt Church."

"But, sir, there is but one Church—*one*, sir. You have just been saying so."

"My good friend, that is a very difficult subject; probably I should not be able to make you understand—"

"Difficult!" interrupted the man—"not at all, sir. I can understand what *one* is very well. And this good baker; he sells *one* loaf for *one* penny to *one* person, and understands what *one* means as well as you do. Now please to explain to us how it is that you say the Church of Rome is a Church, and that there is only one Church, and yet say *you* are a member of the Church of England?"

"I am afraid it's no use arguing with you," said Mr. Knight.

"I hate argument, sir, but I like common sense. That which is *one* can't be *two*. If the Church is one, your English Churchmen may be the Church, or the Roman Catholics may be the Church, but you can't *both* be the Church. Surely 'tis common sense. What you call the English Church is a perverse body which once rose up in the true Catholic Church, and separated from or was turned out of her; and then, being powerful and wicked, this English *Church*, as you call it, took the churches from the Catholics, and endeavoured to drive their religion out of the country. And to talk of *one* Church after that—well, it does pass all belief!"

"There are other tests," said Mr. Knight, gravely.

"Yes, sir. But you, of course, know that the true Church is proved by all these tests at once. This good man has said it very well. The Church of England is not Catholic; for Catholic means universal, and we all know she is not *that*. But the Roman Church *is* universal, or Catholic. Go where you will, you find her children. They are of all nations and languages, and they all hold one faith. They all know that mortal sin must be repented of, or the soul that has so sinned will go down into hell; and they all know that the place in which to wash out sin is the confessional, where the priests exercise the power given by Christ to the first priests; 'whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven.' This *one* Church has *one* doctrine, and *one* field for its labours—that field is

the world. ‘Go ye and teach all nations,’ said the Head of the Church to His first Bishops; and you have no right to learn,” said he, turning round to me, “you have no right to learn of persons like this gentleman, because God has *not* sent *them*, and He *has sent* the priests of the Catholic Church. And the teaching of the Catholic Church is the same *now* as the teaching of the Apostles was *then*, and that is what you say when you repeat the word *Apostolic*.”

I suppose I looked stupid and puzzled; for the stranger laid his hand on my shoulder and said, “Did you not say a sentence just now? Say it again.”

“I believe in one Catholic and Apostolic Church,” said I, making a great pause after every word.

“You *will* believe in that when you belong to the true Church, called the Church of Rome, and never till then,” he said, “let this good gentleman say what he likes. And when you again repeat the marks of the Church, add the word *holy*. She is One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic.”

Now here the thing might have ended very well, if it had not been for Ellen; but she looked up at me and said, “Oh, Joe, don’t be a Catholic; they worship idols!”

“That’s right!” exclaimed the clergyman.

“And oh, Joe,” cried Ellen again, in such a confused, frightened sort of way, “they make a god of the Virgin Mary! I’ve heard the Wesleyan preacher say so a thousand times.”

“Go on—you are right; so they do,” said Mr.

Knight again, looking quite merry about it. But Ellen was not merry; she was ready to cry; but she said again:

"And oh, Joe, the priests are such men! And they give the people leave to sin as much as they please if they'll only pay for it. And don't you recollect we were saying only a few hours ago, as we looked on our blessed babe, that we had had too much to do with sin already. Oh, Joe, don't make yourself a Roman Catholic!"

I knew that Ellen had not understood a word that had been said; but I could explain nothing to her, for Mr. Knight cried:

"You are right, my good woman; keep steadfast to that. You have told the truth; let no one persuade you out of it."

He would have said more, but the stranger advanced a step and stood before him: "Sir," he said, "you are bearing false witness against us, and you know it!"

Mr. Knight got red and looked angry. "How dare you say so?" he said.

"I do dare, sir," answered the man, "because I believe you to be a scholar, as I see you are a gentleman; and if so, I repeat that you are bearing *false witness*, and *you know it*. I hope that the dread of the punishment that is due to this sin may make your heart tremble, till you think upon God's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church as the only place of pardon and peace. This, sir, is the best wish I can give you, and you have it from my heart."

Not one tone of anger was in what the man said, but something very solemn and earnest, and yet

quite natural; and I was sure that it was his heart that spoke. Then he turned to me:

"As for you," he said, "you seem a sensible, worldly-wise kind of man: *use your judgment* in this matter. The evidences of the truth of God's Church are easily got at, easily examined, easily understood. I say to you, *use your judgment.*"

"And, Baker, I say to you that this man, who now says, '*use your judgment*,' says what his Church does not allow. She allows of *no* private judgment. *You know that she doesn't,*" said Mr. Knight turning from me to the man; "you know that she doesn't. You know that this man would have to give up all private judgment if he joined your Church; you know that you are not allowed to use your judgment yourself."

"I know, sir," answered the man, "that this person"—and he laid his hand on my shoulder—"that this person is a Protestant; and I look upon him as one in search of a religion—as one who seeks. Now all who seek must use their judgment. They go on looking, hearing, reading, and asking, *Is this true?—is this?* But when a man *has found*, he seeks no more; all questioning is given up, judgment ceases, and faith begins. The Catholic has found the one Church. He has faith. She teaches him; he knows it to be the voice of God. He bows down his whole self, and says, '*Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth.*' He remains like a little child, obedient, loving, full of faith and gratitude, and joy and hope. As a child rests upon a mother's breast, he rests on holy Church; and that Mother of all God's children guides his steps, and for ever points upward to Jesus

on the cross, from whom come grace and salvation. This, sir, is why a Catholic has done with private judgment: all judgment is swallowed up in faith."

I looked at Mr. Knight, and thought that he was moved by what the man had said. And I felt that the man had a very pious way of speaking and thinking, and that this commanded respect.

" You are better informed than I expected from your appearance," said Mr. Knight. " I believe that you Catholics have a deeper religious education than we ever give to our people; but still I hope that you, Baker, will not be interfered with. Our new acquaintance here tells you to use your judgment, and flatters your pride by referring to intellectual powers; for my part, I should have thought better of him if he had referred you to God's grace."

The stranger smiled; he smiled a very bold, cheerful, pleasant smile, and, as Mr. Knight turned to go, he said—

" One word more, sir; one word on what you have just said. This grace of God—don't think that a Catholic can ever forget that. By the grace of God I have been here this day, and the truth has been spoken in this room. Sir, you are a gentleman, and I am a labourer; you are a scholar, and I can only read and write. In the eyes of the world I am nothing in comparison with you; but in the eye of God I have this immeasurable advantage over you—I am *RIGHT*, and you are *WRONG*. By the grace of God I am what I am; I mean no boasting. I have spoken a word for our mother the Church this day, and I pray the holy Virgin that you may not forget it."

"Well, good by," said Mr. Knight; "you are not a bad preacher, and I must say, you seem to know it. Good bye."

The man looked distressed. "Indeed," he said, "I have said nothing of my own—it is the teaching of the Church."

Mr. Knight was gone.

"And now," said the man to me, "now about Fanny Cowper?"

"She lives at Hill Grove. Do you know her well?"

"Let me see; five years since we met. But I have known her from a child. She's a steady woman, I believe?"

"The nicest person in the country," said I, laughing.

The man laughed too.

"Let us see you again," said I.

"No; not likely. Much obliged to you."

"Well, what's your name?"

"John Fairfield," he cried out as he went up the little street, and waved his hand in farewell.

It was not now my custom to drive the bread-cart myself; a boy did that work for me. I did not see Hill Grove for several weeks after this. When I did see it, there was a new cook there.  
"Where was Fanny?"

"Oh, Fanny had left; she was married."

"Indeed! Whom did she marry?"

"An old friend from a distance."

"What is her name now?"

"Fairfield; she is Mrs. Fairfield now."



## CHAPTER IV.

### MRS. BAKER'S FAMILY.



SEVERAL months passed away, and Ellen and I had often wondered where Fanny and John Fairfield lived, and often said that we should like to hear about them.

Yet still Ellen would say that she could never bear their religion. They were certainly very nice people, and had very respectable ways with them, and seemed full of knowledge ; but as to the Roman Catholic faith, she could never bear *that*, for it was full of nothing but wickedness.

I used to reply to this, that if she could not bear wickedness, there was nothing to suit her in our village.

Ellen agreed to this ; indeed there was no denying it ; and still time passed on, and we were no nearer the truth. At last I had a letter from John Fairfield. It was to say that he had often thought of how he had had to speak for his mother the Church in my house, and that his wife often spoke of us with pleasure ; and that he thought we should be glad to know that they had got into a very comfortable house, with sixty acres of ground belong-

ing to it, and were prospering very well. He also said that Fanny had given him a son, and that he was very proud of his child, and that the infant made him think of the pretty baby he had seen in my wife's arms, and that they should like to know how we all were, and that they hoped that we might visit them, though we were full fifty miles apart.

We had great pleasure in this letter ; I should have liked to see my friends, but it was quite impossible to leave home. A working man cannot have many holidays, and I was enlarging my business, which was a serious affair, and made my constant presence necessary.

And now, dear reader, will you take a look at my prospects with me ?

To begin then : my wife was changed from the girl I had married to a steady woman ; very earnest, hard-working, thoughtful, and managing. Who could ever have expected such a change ? We would sit together and laugh over our former selves.

“ Ellen,” said I one day, “ I never see an artificial flower, and there are no feathers in your winter bonnets now. I even think I can remember necklaces and bracelets, and I am sure there was lace and fringe ; and you used to have your neck and throat open, and your bonnet was more to the back of your head. Ellen, is it you or the fashion that is changed ?” And my wife made me this answer :

“ Perhaps the fashion is changed, Joe ; yet there are foolish fashions now, I dare say, only I don’t go after them. But I am changed most, Joe ; and this is the way. When I dressed as you describe, I

was a poor half-fed girl, with a very miserable home, and no pleasure but what a little finery could bring me. Very little money bought the things you mention, and I had often no feet to the stockings that were inside my coloured boots. But now, Joe, thanks to you, I am in a very respectable situation in life, I have a higher character to support, I feel above all foolish finery; I am more like a respectable tradesman's wife, with my merino gown, and straw bonnet, and good large shawl, than I should be with the nonsense you recollect so well. And if I had had a good home, a steady father, and a happy mother, I should always have had higher thoughts about myself. I believe that that foolish sort of finery always comes out of something miserable; for the moment people begin to lead a really decent life, they come out in quite another sort of thing. I would not see my child such as I was; no, not for the world."

Ellen, with a true mother's heart, always turned to her child. And I was changed too. I was softened, and certainly thankful to Providence, for my improved wife, my good and beautiful child, and for my great prosperity.

I say great prosperity; for by the time my little Lizzie was five years old, I had bought the house that adjoined ours, and had opened a pastrycook's shop. We taught ourselves the business entirely by careful trying and studying receipt-books. How we weighed, and measured, and mixed together, and read the book, and watched the oven; and at last took out our tarts and cakes quite perfect, and fit for any lord to dine off! You may guess how we were pleased.

It was an expensive and an anxious experiment, but we made it for this reason—we thought of Lizzie; she might easily manage a pastrycook's business, but my baking concern was more than a woman could be expected to manage; so we set up the new shop with a view to the future prosperity of the child.

Now I wanted more hands to help me. I turned my thoughts towards Ellen's family. We had always given them two loaves of bread weekly. It was the best thing we could do for them; money would all have gone in drink.

Richard Maple, the father, was now almost an idiot. I had never let him come to our house, and I had never let Lizzie go to his. He did not like me in consequence; and when he was drunk, would call after me in the street and abuse Ellen; but he was become like a brute, and had none of a man's feelings about him. The poor mother, thinner, and sadder, and more tried than ever,—oh, my heart used to bleed for her! She really supported them all, doing any thing that people would give her to do, and looking like a ghost wearied with walking the earth.

The two girls next younger than Ellen were not at home now. The elder one had gone off somewhere—nobody knew where; at last she came to be forgotten, I think. The other, Lucy, at little more than sixteen, married a boy of a year older, and they went off, amidst the rude laughter of all the village, to America. For my part, when she said to me, "Any hi ng's better than home, Joe," I felt she was right; and Ellen gave her what the

girl thought a handsome present, and I made her very welcome to it.

Then came Jem and Mary ; they had both died the last winter of "the fever." I am sure that it would have been better for them if their living souls had had as many thoughts as were given to their cold corpses. We sent them food in their illness ; Ellen was there often, and she hired a nurse to help her mother. But there lay the poor, ignorant, worn-out creatures, dying, dying in spite of the doctors and every body else. It would be nonsense to talk of these young things having had any knowledge of religion—they had none. While they lay in their mortal illness, a Ranting preacher and a Methodist woman came. Jem could not bear the sight of them, and clasping his aching head and throbbing temples, muttered curses as they preached or prayed. The girl was so frightened at the first few things they said, that she became delirious ; and so those poor creatures—those souls for whom Christ died—passed out of life and went to judgment. And I must believe that when the just Judge of all mankind passed sentence on their souls, He looked back to the cause of their miserable ignorance, and dealt gently with them.

As I looked at their dead bodies, I repeated the words, "I believe in One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." I stopped there, and then said to myself, "I am sure I wish that I *could* believe those words—I wish that I *could* find the thing they describe. John Fairfield called that Church his mother. Mother! a spiritual mother given by our God and Saviour to do a mother's part by our souls. What is a mother's part? To

nourish, cherish, guide; to shield from all danger; guide to all good; to support in trouble; and through all to teach salvation. Surely if these children had known such a mother, Jesus would not have died upon the cross in vain for them. "In vain!" I cried; "oh, *not* in vain—they are not lost—they were never taught. O God, be merciful!"

The thought was too terrible, it tore my heart; I cried out, "Oh, don't let us be lost because we don't know!" It made me feel giddy, as if the world was whirling round with me; and my heart kept on expostulating, as it were, with some unseen accuser; and I kept on saying, "But if we don't know? and how should we know? there are a hundred different stories telling round me; and how should I know which is right, or if any are right? I am no judge; only Mr. Knight says every Sunday, and I say with him, 'I believe in One Catholic and Apostolic Church;' and he says that that Church is the Established Church in England, and I am sure that that is no description of the Established Church in England; and so all that I can possibly say that I know for certain is, that *one* of the many parties about me *tells what is not true*, and that *that* party I follow! Oh, what a situation for a man of common sense to be in! And while some are quarrelling, and some reasoning, and some saying one thing and some another,—others die like these!" And again I cried, "O Lord, they were never taught; O Lord, be merciful!"

But now that they were dead, who was to bury them? Mr. Knight vowed he wouldn't. He had

never had them living, and he wouldn't have them dead. Their names were not down in the register-book of baptisms; in fact, they had been baptised by the Wesleyans, and he would not have any thing to do with them.

I had intended to pay the funeral expenses; but when I heard this, I told the mother to go to the parish; and to the parish she went.

The parish expected Mr. Knight to bury them. Mr. Knight still refused. There was a meeting of farmers. Mr. Knight said he owed them no obedience. They said that he took their money, and that he should do their work. What was he paid for, they should like to know? Did he mean to say that he alone in the parish could baptise? Did he mean to say that those corpses were to stay always above ground? Did he know that the doctors had said that every life in the village was in danger? And did he think that he alone was the Church? The farmers could tell him that *they* were the Church, and that *they* did not hold with him in his views about baptism; that *they* did not believe that he had got the true doctrine; and that whether he had or not, those bodies were to be buried in their parish churchyard. But no words could move Mr. Knight. He said the bodies might be buried in the Wesleyan burial-ground. But the farmers stood out; they were going to pay the funeral expenses, and they would bury in the churchyard. All this time these sturdy rate-payers occupied a room in a public-house, and angry messages were exchanged between them and the parsonage every hour, and the quarrel grew hotter and hotter, and Mr. Knight was pronounced to be

no gospel preacher, and to starve the souls in his parish; and this by people who had "always followed the Church," and who called themselves churchmen, and boasted of being the sons and grandsons of churchmen.

At last the unburied bodies became a serious consideration. A neighbouring clergyman came to the rate-payers, and proposed to bury them; and while Mr. Knight sat in his study pretending not to see, the poor children were consigned to the churchyard earth, and the trouble ended.

"And this is being One and Catholic," said I to myself, with a bitter smile, as I came back from the funeral. "How can Mr. Knight teach such folly, when there are not ten people of *his* Church in this parish who think as he does?"

It was after these events that we began to think, as I have said, of taking one of Ellen's family to help us. I offered my place to Tommy, the eldest of the two boys who were left. He was a sharp, fine-grown lad, of fourteen years of age.

It would be difficult to tell you what a trouble this boy was; he could not keep his hands from picking and stealing. I fed him well, gave him pocket-money, put temptation out of his way as much as possible; but he stole every little thing that came in his way. Then I beat him; and that did him no good, only made him more artful, I think. Ellen was miserable. I turned him off. Before two days were over he had gone to a shop on a pretended message from me, and possessed himself of goods to a large amount. He was found out, taken before the magistrates, and sent to prison. When he came out, it was really dreadful

to see him. He walked with a proud strut, as if he were a great man; and talked of the gaol and the people he had met there, as if it had been a place of honour and preferment. I saw that he could come to no good.

I said to my wife, "If England does not soon find this good mother given by God—this Church, One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic, to guide and teach His children; if England does not soon find her, more gaols must be built. If there can't be found any power to guide us by love, we must make a power to protect us through fear. It's my opinion that we are getting wickeder and wickeder every day."

"*Find the Church, Joe!*" said Ellen. "Why, I thought you said that you *believed in it* every Sunday?"

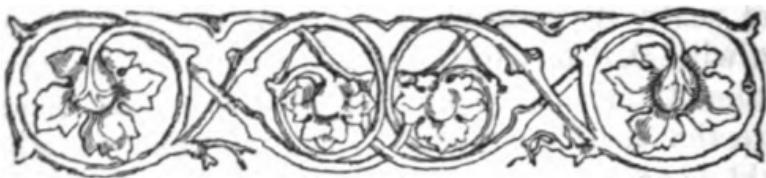
"Well, wife, and so I do," I answered. "There must be such, because I see and feel the want of it; but where is it? that's the question. This Church of England can't satisfy me on the first point. She is not *One*, for no two people think alike, it seems to me. Certainly then she is not *One*, for she *has not one faith*." But still I went to church and said this belief, which is in the Communion Service—and still I thought, I wonder where this Church is, for I am sure it isn't here.

As Tommy would not do, we took Bill, the youngest. That boy was like an animal untamed. He was so frightened and nervous, that I thought he was out of his senses. His mother said that it was because of the constant trouble at home; that he had not the spirit to turn wild like Tom, and so he was cowed and timid. Ellen thought so too.

And really it opened my heart to the boy to see him with that terrified face and shrinking manner, feeling, I am sure, more degraded than any black slave that ever was born. I did not think that he could ever be of any use to us; but I told Ellen to do her best with him for charity; and so she did.

It took full a year of petting and fondling and painstaking before that boy became at all like other children—before he could give a message without stammering, or look any one in the face long enough to hear and understand an answer. But after a long time he showed cleverness, and a very good disposition, and was useful to us. And we thought the more of good dispositions in this boy, for Tom had finished his disgrace. He was found dead by the roadside one cold winter's morning; the person who last saw him had observed that he was half drunk.





## CHAPTER V.

### THIS WORLD AGAINST THE NEXT.

**N**o change happened to us for several years; all things prospered; I saved money, and put in the bank; all things seemed to stay just the same; only my dear little girl grew fast, and was ten years old, and very lovely. She was fair as a lily, with very black hair, and fine black eye-brows and eye-lashes, and deep blue eyes. Every body said how beautiful she was; and the family at Hill Grove used to notice her very much, and she and her mother used to spend a day there sometimes in the housekeeper's room.

Richard Maple, my father-in-law, died, and his widow took a lodging which we furnished for her, and I gave Bill board wages that he might live with his mother and help to support her. We had the pleasure of seeing her quite comfortable. Still I went to church, and sung in the gallery; and I took little Lizzie with me, who already showed that she inherited my taste for music; and together we said those words which I have so often repeated, that we believed in a Church which was Catholic, and Apostolic.

Once the child said to me, "Father, where is the One, Catholic, and Apostolic Church?"

Her mother burst out laughing, and turned aside her face to hide her amusement. But I was determined to be as true as I could be, and so I kissed the little beauty's rosy lips, and said, "I don't know, my dear."

"When you know, will you tell me?" she asked.

"Yes, Lizzie, that I will; I promise, my child."

Often afterwards I thought of those few words.

And now I had another letter from John Fairfield. He asked if I was *never* coming to see them. They had three children, three little girls; the eldest boy they had buried. They were getting on very well; not as well, perhaps, as they heard that I was getting on, but still very well for a small tenant farmer; and they were happy and contented, and hoped that I would come and see them. The letter contained a small book, which Fanny hoped we would teach Elizabeth to say by heart. Reader, the book was the *Catholic Penny Catechism*. It opened, as if by accident, at the fifteenth page, and immediately the subject was presented to my eyes which I had so often had in my thoughts.

"Q. Has the Church of Christ any marks by which you may know her?

A. Yes. She is One—she is Holy—she is Catholic—she is Apostolical."

I read on to the words, "Christ has promised that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His Church; that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth, and that He Himself will abide with her *for ever*."

"FOR EVER! She is on earth, then, *now*. She is still taught by the Holy Ghost. She is still proof against the powers of hell."

"Oh, where is this Church?" I cried; and putting down the little book, I said, "It is not the Church of England, *that is certain*—she cannot stand the tests. Yet it is somewhere. Oh, where? Are the Roman Catholics right, after all?"

Now, believing and thinking all this, did I go to John Fairfield, or ask him for books, or do any thing to learn how I was to save my soul in the Church of my God and Saviour Jesus Christ? No; I did nothing. Or, rather, I made up my mind the other way, and determined *not* to visit the Fairfields, and *not* to teach my child that catechism, or any thing else. And what was my reason for all this? My friends, you must have patience while I tell you that my chief business now was among the gentry. I had a steady and increasing business with them, both in the bake-house and in the pastry-shop. I knew that if I should become a Catholic, I should be a ruined man. If I moved to another place, I could not expect to get into such a business again. And my thoughts were on my child. She was getting on to twelve years of age, growing more elegant and beautiful every day. I wanted to make her independent—I wanted to give her a fortune, so that she might marry well, and I might see my pride crowned by looking upon her as a lady. My beautiful child was my delight, my treasure, and my snare.

She could now read and write, and she worked very well. She was learning history and geo-

graphy. She used to beg to go to a boarding-school, where she could learn music; but I could not consent to that yet. I told her she must turn her thoughts to the pastry; and yet in my heart I determined to make her independent of pastry, and every thing else. As to religion: she knew the ten commandments by heart, and was told to try to keep them; and she read the New Testament, and some of the Old Testament, just as she might read any other book containing affecting and interesting narratives. And this was all I did towards taking care of a soul for which Christ died! Sometimes I wished that *she* might become a Catholic. But there was no chance of that, though the penny catechism was not destroyed, and was turned out of a corner every now and then, when there was more than a common cleaning.

And at one of these times Mr. Knight entered the house. "What is this?" he said, and took up the book. I told him what it was: he looked cold and angry.

"If you are going that way," he said, "it is time for every person of influence in this parish to set themselves against you."

I knew that my business was in his hands; for all the parish would join him against a Catholic.

"The book came into this house by the post," I answered; "and was sent here by a friend. You may take it and burn it, or do as you like with it."

"Has your little girl learnt any of it?"

"Not one word, sir."

"Then I will take it," said Mr. Knight; "and you, depend upon it, are better without it."

And so my only Catholic book went out of the house.

This was wrong. But the thought of being a Catholic did not go out of my heart. These were my thoughts. I had now been married fifteen years, and for more than thirteen years I had had the whole profits of the business for my own. We had lived savingly, and been careful in all things; and had not had an expensive family. In these thirteen years I had settled with my old master's heirs, and had put into the bank six hundred pounds. I had always added the interest to the principal; and when the penny catechism was taken out of my house, I had six hundred pounds in the bank. I thought to myself that, as soon as I had a thousand pounds, I would become a Catholic. I knew that if I could *for four years only* put in about seventy pounds a year, and the interest, that I should then have a thousand pounds.

Then I thought that I would leave our village, take a business in some large town, and become a Catholic; and see my dear child, at eighteen years of age, a Catholic also. For the next four years I thought that I could keep my darling safe from sin; and so I deceived my soul, and marked out my future for myself. And I also thought that the next spring I would go to see John and Fanny Fairfield; for I fancied now that I should like to see a Catholic family, and the management of a Catholic house, and the bringing up of Catholic children; and also that I should like to have some Catholic books, and see a Catholic chapel, be instructed in Catholic services, and behold a

Catholic priest. Next spring, said I, I'll see all this.

But that winter there came over me very often a remarkable fear of death. If I should die ! I was very strong, and had never had an illness in my life; but such people sometimes died off suddenly, and I might have an accident. And then—oh, my child ! Would she be left to temptation ? and would she fall into grievous sin ? Or would she be the prey of some person who had no religion, and be a miserable degraded wife ? Or would she fall in love with some one as inexperienced as herself, and run through her money, and bring herself to bitter poverty ? Or would she marry what people call *well*, and keep herself smart and luxurious, and so go through life with no knowledge of any thing after this world, and die in dread and fear of a judgment that she knew nothing about ? Beauty and a gay disposition—money and a thriving business—ah, said I to myself, they are good things in their way, and more, they may be blessings; but death, and judgment, and the next world ! She must have more than that with which to stand before her God; *and so must I!* And so I said, I will become a Catholic as soon as I have made the thousand pounds ; and, in the mean time, *I mustn't die!*

Still from time to time I trembled. That winter there were many sudden deaths in our parish : each one was a shock to me. I thought I had never known so many deaths of this sort before. Two boys were found dead, and no account could be had of them. A strong man fell down a corpse as he was putting up fagots in a rick ; a young

woman dropt down dead as she was mounting to the top of the coach. Every accident made me tremble; and I felt within myself, *I mustn't die!*

How much Ellen thought of religion at this time I did not know. I never told her any thing of what I thought on the subject. She worked hard, and seldom gave herself a holiday. She very seldom went either to church or chapel; yet sometimes to one and sometimes to the other. But she took great care of Lizzie; all her ideas of religion seemed to me to centre in the thought of keeping that girl unspotted from the world.

She did not like Lizzie to go any where without her. But it would have saddened the girl's spirit to be as much at home as her mother was. The only thing then was, to try to keep her in good company; but there was no good company. She was sure to see or hear something that we would have kept from her, if she went out by herself. The place Lizzie went oftenest to was Hill Grove. Ellen often went there by invitation from the housekeeper. The ladies of the house on these occasions generally came to the housekeeper's room to see her. They were very kind, pleasant ladies, and highly accomplished. They used to admire Lizzie very much, and would often make her sing, and sing with her; and from this they went on to teaching her new songs and fancy-work, and to lending her entertaining and instructive books; so that Lizzie got a great deal of pleasure and improvement at Hill Grove, and was always happy to go there.

I used to try to prepare my child's mind to receive the Catholic faith in many little ways. I

would tell her of Fanny Fairfield and John, and promise her friends in their children; and often said boldly, that the old religion was the best for England. She knew that the Catholics had built that fine old church, and that the market-cross, which was so much admired, was their work also. I never missed an opportunity of waking an interest in her mind about Catholic people and things ; and I often read books myself entirely for the purpose of finding something to tell Lizzie about Catholic goodness and charity in the old times.

And there was another way of teaching her and teaching myself. Fanny Fairfield sent me often a Catholic newspaper. I did not care for the politics, though I read that part sometimes, and felt that the Catholics were very ill used. But when I came to an account of some good deed,—of some holy sermon,—of some lady, great in this world, going to voluntary poverty in a convent for the sake of the poor of Christ's Church, then I was greatly pleased, and would talk about it to Lizzie as she walked by my side on the river's brink, and picked mosses and ferns for the ladies at Hill Grove.

Sometimes there was a begging-letter from some very poor mission: this kind of thing always interested me. I learnt a good deal of how people suffered, and of the value set on the sacraments, from these letters; and I recollect enough of what the penny catechism taught to see that all Catholics believed exactly the same.

And sometimes I used to see in these newspapers an account of a holy death. And I would read over a sentence, such as, "Of your charity pray for the soul of — — — , who died on the

— day of —, having received the last sacraments," full twenty times, and feel a particular delight in it.

Thus time went on, and the spring came, and Lizzie's fifteenth birth-day. I had put a good sum of money again into the bank; I had said, in three years I will become a Catholic, and leave this place; and I was turning in my mind whether I would go and see the Fairfields or not.

While I was thinking thus, a pleasant-looking young man came to our house with a parcel directed to me, and sent by Fanny. He was such a very pleasant-mannered man, and so fine-grown and well-looking, that I could not help keeping him a few moments in conversation before I opened the parcel.

I found that he was a traveller for a large house in the plain and fancy button line, and that he had known John Fairfield all his life.

Lizzie came forward when she heard John's name, and said, "Is your name Fairfield, sir?"

"No," he answered, "my name is Willoughby, Francis Willoughby."

I could not help seeing that his face wore a smile of admiration as he glanced at my beautiful treasure.

"And you sell *buttons*?" said Lizzie, in a child-like artless way, and evidently showing that she thought *buttons* but a mean thing to make a stock in trade with.

Willoughby laughed—"Yes, *buttons*. Did you ever see any buttons made?"

"No, never; it must be stupid work."

"Not at all; and to watch it is most interesting.

Could you guess how this is made?" And he took from a case an ornamental button for a lady's gown — it looked like a blue forget-me-not tied with a golden cord, and two lovely little tassels hung down from it. Lizzie uttered a loud cry of admiration, and Willoughby laughed, and said, "Buttons were not so disagreeable after all."

This while I had opened the parcel. It contained three pairs of beautifully-knit cuffs, one each for myself, my wife, and child. There was a short note, and in it Willoughby was mentioned as a highly-respectable young man. I asked him to dine; and as a neck of mutton was just being served in the room behind the shop, he went there immediately with us.

As he stood at the table he made the sign of the cross, and I knew that he was a Catholic.

He stayed to tea. He was a most agreeable talker. He described the whole process of button-making, and delighted us extremely; and he talked about the Fairfields. The way in which he spoke of them determined me to go and see them. I now knew much of their holy habits; of how their children were brought up; of John's knowledge and prudence; of Farny's steadiness and economy; and, in my mind's eye, I saw their house: the clean kitchen, and prettily-stocked dresser; the hams, the bacon, the stored eggs, the made wine, the pots of good preserves; the horses in the stable, the cows in the shed, the poultry, the fat pigs, and the growing porkers!

Willoughby had such a lively way of talking; what he described I seemed to see quite plainly. He did not say that the Fairfields were rich; there

was not a word of money in the bank; but I understood that they led a hard-working, industrious, regular life, and were sufficiently prosperous.

Willoughby also described the house. I felt always so much interested in these people, that even trifles in connexion with them would have been pleasant to me. But our new friend was not a man to give a dull description. He said that the house was an old one, and had once been much larger. That the part that had been taken down was that over the entrance and parlour. There, he said, the house was now only one room high, and thatched; but that you turned from the old entrance-hall into a passage on your left, and that then the house rose to the height of three rooms, namely, the kitchens, the bed-rooms over, and attics over them; and that this part of the house had a high-pitched roof, and was covered with tiles; and that up in the gable-was the coat of arms of the family to whom the property had once belonged. He said there was a pretty garden with an old-fashioned covered-in well in it, and a small orchard where the lent-lilies and snowdrops were brilliant in the spring; where lilacs, laburnums, and hawthorn bloomed along the hedge, and where there was an old yew-tree, with a stem so large and so hollow, that the children would place a stool in it for a table, and drink tea there with their dolls. Every word I heard determined me to visit the Fairfields; and Lizzie, who had listened with sparkling eyes, quite longed to go with me.

There was no more to hear. I asked how far they were from the Catholic chapel. Willoughby told us that they were about three-quarters of a

mile distant from a small town called Morton; that there was a chapel and two priests there, and Mass at half-past eight and eleven; and that John and Fanny took it in turns to go to the early Mass with the children, so that all of them heard Mass every holiday. He told us how well the children were brought up, and how much they were taught; and that he agreed with the Fairfields in thinking that in these days, when there was so much dispute in the country, Catholic children ought to be very well instructed. I certainly agreed with this young man in all he said; and I thought that, if Catholic young men were generally like him, I would believe in the Church without further inquiry. Thank God, I have since found many, many, very many like him; but at that time I had never seen such a young man before in my life.

Reader, I began to think that he would make a good husband for my dear daughter. I felt that I could trust her with *him*. I determined to ask all about him when I went to the Fairfields, and I did so. I will look forward for a moment, to tell you what I heard. He was dead. He had died from the effects of an accident in travelling. John Fairfield told me that he believed that that young man had never had more than one month's faults, unrepented of and unconfessed, on his conscience in all his life—never since he first went to confession at seven years old. “Give me a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within me.” I had often read those words in my Bible. Here, then, was the fulfilment of that prayer. O great, O holy Mother!—wonderful Church!—such are the children you bring up for God!

I mention this young man, because his visit formed one of the incidents of my life at this time, and made me determine on visiting the Fairfields as soon as possible ; and because the description he gave of the Fairfields' house, perhaps, in some degree, assisted me in circumstances which were shortly to arise. He is with the faithful departed, and I shall not name him any more.





## CHAPTER VI.

### THE HOUR OF FEAR AND THE VOICE OF FAITH.

**I**HAD to go to John Fairfield's by the coach. This conveyance started from the small town of Moncton towards evening, and took me to Morton, which, as has been already said, was about a mile from my friends' house. Thus I was obliged to arrive at my journey's end at an inconvenient hour—at about four o'clock in the morning. I travelled outside, and so had not much sleep. Indeed, I was so busy with my thoughts that I should not have slept sound with more suitable accommodations. I was thinking of the Catholic Faith.

I should like you, my readers, to know exactly how much religious knowledge I had at this particular time. You already know that the little penny catechism had been my chief instructor, and that my knowledge of the working of the true faith had been gathered from my acquaintance with the Fairfields and reading the Catholic newspapers. This much then I felt to understand clearly: That by the Catholic Church is meant

all the faithful under one head, that head being the Lord Jesus. That by the expression, "all the faithful," is meant all those persons whose religion is the same as that which was held and taught by the Lord's Apostles.

That these Apostles received power and authority to plant the Church; and that the Holy Ghost came down upon them visibly for this purpose on the day of Pentecost.

That they had power to ordain; and that by this sacrament of holy orders men received the grace of God, by which they too had the power of forgiving sins when repented of and confessed. That this succession of priests has never been lost in the Church. *That the present priests of the Catholic Church received in their ordination the same gifts, for the same purposes, as those men whom the Apostles ordained.* I felt that it must be so. That a Church without priests would be a Church without sacraments, and of no use—a mere form—like a body without the life; and that, like that body, it would go to decay and be known no more.

And when I thought of the work that priests were to do, I saw very plainly that the gift of the Holy Ghost was necessary to enable them to do it. They were to forgive sins. Now, no man, by his own power, can forgive sins. But when a man has received in the sacrament of orders the grace of God, then he can execute God's commission, and what our Saviour said comes true: "Whosoever you shall bind upon earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever you shall loose upon earth shall be loosed in Heaven." "Whose sins

you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained."

Also, I knew that there was another and a most awful power that belonged to the priests—*the changing of the bread and wine by the words of consecration into the real body and blood of Christ*. I bent my head on my hands and pondered upon this; and I thank God that I never disbelieved it.

I knew the words of our Lord: THIS IS MY BODY, THIS IS MY BLOOD. I knew that to his first priests—the Apostles—He had said, Do THIS. I knew that Jesus had said of Himself that He *was the Bread that came down from Heaven*; and that He had also said, "*He that eateth of this bread shall live forever.*" I knew, again, that He had said, "*The bread that I shall give is my Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.*" I knew that St. Paul had said, "*The cup of blessing which we bless is the communion of the Blood of Christ;*" and "*The Bread which we break is the communion of the Body of Christ.*" And all this exactly agreed with the teaching of the catechism.

Thus, my friends, I may sum up my knowledge in a small space, by saying, that I was sure that there must be a Church, and that her teaching must be *one*, or the same always and everywhere; that it must be *holy*, or it could not represent the will of God; that it must be *Catholic*, or spread over the earth, because the command was to teach all nations; and that it must be *Apostolic*, or holding and teaching what the Apostles taught. Also, that it must last through all time, because Jesus had promised to be with it to the consummation of the world. Also, that it could never go into

error, because Jesus had promised that the gates of hell should not prevail against it, and that the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of truth, should dwell with it. And that this Church must have priests, because they had to do things which could be done only by men set apart for the work by the gift of the Holy Ghost. And thus thinking and examining my mind, I completed my journey.

When the coach stopped at Morton, I observed what seemed to me a great stirring of the people, seeing that it was so very early in the morning, scarcely four o'clock. I jumped down, and received a bag, which contained a change of linen and a few small necessaries; and standing with this and a stout walking-stick in my hand, I watched the coach depart. Then I turned round to a porter to ask the way to "Old Farm," as the Fairfields' house was called.

"I am off myself in a moment," said the man—"stop for me!" and he was gone before I could utter another word. This surprised me; and at that moment a dozen or more men and boys came to sight from round a corner; their pace almost a run, and their troubled manner showing that something extraordinary was in progress somewhere.

"The way to Old Farm?" I cried out to them. "Come along, come along!" they answered. And now was heard a sound of wheels rattling along a distant street, and the hum of innumerable voices. "What's the matter?" I exclaimed. "The engines!" said one of the men, looking back at me. "Come along!" "Where to?" I called out. "Old Farm; fire!" was the answer; and they turned into another street, and were out of sight.

At this instant the porter came out to whom I had first spoken. I threw my carpet-bag into his arms, and called out, "Keep it safe till I come back, and I'll pay you." And then I rushed after the men, overtook them, and hastened on to Old Farm, with a wildly-beating heart, and such emotions of fear and sorrow as I am not able to describe. There was a picture in my mind, formed from Willoughby's description. I seemed to see it plainly as I rushed along. The low part of the house thatched, and the high, up-standing, red-tiled gable by its side. And in a few minutes that picture was realised; but all in a dreadful illumination of fierce flame, which it made the eye ache to look upon, and the far-spreading heat of which was felt in the air before we entered the stone-paved yard in which the burning dwelling stood.

In a moment I was in that yard, and in another moment I seemed to see and to understand all the circumstances and every particular. That which I must describe to you in many words, the mind took in at a single glance. I can hardly say that I saw it, for it seems to me as if I was aware of all that was going on before I had time to look round.

In one part of this paved yard there was a large cart, in which mattresses, beds, blankets, and such things had been thrown; and on the top of all lay a man whom I knew immediately to be John Fairfield. All his hair had been burnt off, and more than half his face was so scorched as to be black. He was not dressed, but rugs and sheets were gathered round him. One arm, bruised, naked, and bleeding, hung over the side of the cart. I knew—I suppose that some people by my side said

so, for a crowd of people were there—I knew that his shoulder was dislocated, and that one leg was broken just above the ankle. A variety of household furniture was strewed about the yard. Some men were trying to get a frantic cart-horse through the crowd. The flames made a ghastly illumination of one corner where a woman with some coloured petticoats tied round her, with naked feet and uncovered head, stood; two little girls clasped in each other's arms were resting on the ground beside her. This was Fanny and her two eldest girls. With the shouts and talking, the rattling noise of the approaching engine was mingled; and yet, notwithstanding the many sounds, I felt that there was a hush among the multitude, as if the greater part were earnestly expecting something, and a concentration of attention, as if hearts watched the result of something which to me was unexplained. All at once there was a general sob, as if a crowd had drawn breath suddenly, and then poured forth one sickening “Oh!” I knew that there was disappointment and terror in that cry; and I saw Fanny mutely stretch forth her hands in the direction of the door of the house, and then clasp them suddenly together. People gathered round and laid hold of her as if to prevent her rushing forward, and I could see her no more. But this movement showed me that two men had been brought senseless from the house; and instantly a piercing cry from a child—a little child, whose form appeared at the highest window of the gable, told me what the people had been expecting, and whom those men had been trying in vain to save.

I cannot tell you how I made my way through that crowd. I cannot tell you what sort of spirit animated me to make me undertake what others had not been able to accomplish. I had never been a coward, but there now rose in my heart a courage I had never known, a determination I had never felt before; and I rushed forward. I say that I cannot tell you how I made my way through that crowd now pressing round the men who had just been brought from the house; but I did pass through them in a single instant, and almost as quick as thought. Yet, as I passed the heavy cart in which the scorched, and maimed, and miserable father lay, I knew that he was aware of the fruitlessness of the effort that had been made, that he had heard that shrill cry from his helpless child, and that his strained eyes beheld her still at the little window high up in the tall gable.

It all came upon me as quick as a flash of lightning; and again I say that I know not how I made my way in a moment through that crowd, but I *do* know that as I passed that cart, I heard the father's prayer; I heard a cry to Him with whom all things are possible; I heard an appeal to that love which can overcome all obstacles, and which knows no bounds. "Heart of Jesus!" was his cry, and he said no more. "Heart of Jesus!" What a power that was to call in aid! Surely it included every thing. Surely ten thousand words could have added to it nothing more. And I know that as I heard it, the scalding tears ran over from my eyes, and my strong heart felt even stronger than before.

I knew that a loud shout arose to keep me back

small chamber fell in; the room filled with smoke and flame. I thrust myself through the aperture of the window, and hung my weight by my hands, which clasped the stone window-sill. "Now!" cried a hundred men at once. "In the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, O Lord, remember him!" said a woman's voice close by. I dropped at that word "Now!" and fell upon the mattress in the cart.





## CHAPTER VII.

### GOOD WORDS AND GOOD EXAMPLE.

HUS my life was saved. My burns were very painful, and my brain seemed confused by the smoke and heat. My eyes smarted, my mouth was parched, my head felt running round. People shook hands with me, and gave me approving smiles and words. I only felt pain and confusion. In the midst there appeared a sweet-countenanced, silver-haired old man. He put the crowd aside, and placed his arm within mine. Another, but a much younger man, gave some directions to Fanny. In a few moments I was inside a carriage, with the elder gentleman and two of Fanny's children. I understood that John Fairfield, his wife, and the other child, were in another carriage: the younger gentleman, looking in, said, "I shall go back across the fields," and then he moved on. These two persons were the Catholic priests of Morton. They took me to their house, and I was attended by a doctor, who dressed my burns and gave me some soothing medicine. I felt better the next day, and was allowed to get up in the afternoon. Fanny came to see me. John

Fairfield was gone to the hospital; and she and the children were in a lodging close to the priest's house.

I was not fit to travel home. One arm was obliged to be dressed daily. The gentlemen were very kind, and told me I should stay there; and they got a choir-boy from their poor-school to wait upon me.

For a few days Fairfield's life was in danger: it was an anxious time. Fanny's eldest girl wrote to my wife and Lizzie, saying what I told her to say, every day. The youngest child, whose life I had saved, was also in the hospital. Of course Fanny was a great deal with her husband; but she spared me an hour or two every day, always bringing one of the girls with her, and always repeating her grateful thanks for what I had done for them. "But God will bless you; He will bless you, Joe. The Virgin Mother hears the prayers of a mother's heart. Yes, I am sure you will be rewarded for this."

I must give you a short account of some conversations that passed between us.

One day I thought that I would talk of religion. So I said to Fanny's child, a nice little girl of twelve years old, "What do you think about the Bible?" Fanny was mending stockings; the long needle was picking up the stitches one by one, but it stopped in her hand at this sudden question, and she said, with a shake of her head and an odd smile, "Oh, Joe, what a question to ask a child!"

"Ah," said I, triumphantly, "she can't answer it. Did you ever read the Bible?"

"I have read the Old Testament history in a book, and I have read the Gospels in the New Testament."

"And what do you think about the New Testament?"

"You mustn't think your own thoughts about God's word," said the child; "*it is the written word of God*, and you must believe it as the Church teaches you to believe it."

I didn't say any more then; but the child's strong, positive way of saying, "It is the *written* word of God," impressed itself upon my mind.

The next day Fanny said to me, "Don't talk to my children about religion, Joe. They are but little things; and I am afraid of wrong thoughts getting into their heads."

I said that I would not. "But," I added, "I got an answer yesterday which I have thought of ever since. The *written* word. Why did the child say *that*?"

"Because in the teaching of the Church there is an *unwritten* word."

"Oh, Fanny, I can't believe that."

"Why not? The gift of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost produced teaching and preaching, not writing and printing. At first it was *all* an *unwritten* word; then those things were written which, put together, make the New Testament Scriptures; but it was never said that every thing was written down. Quite the contrary was said. It is plain that the inspired writers of the Epistles were writing to persons on certain subjects who had been taught a great deal more by word of mouth."

"I couldn't believe the *unwritten word*," said I.

"Then why do you believe the written word?" asked Fanny.

I could not answer her; so I said, "Why do you believe it?"

"On the word of the Church. I receive both on the same authority. The Church collected the inspired writings, and gave them to her children as the written word of God. She says they are the written word of God, and I believe her, and receive them reverently as such."

"It is very wonderful!" said I.

"The teaching of the Church is perfect," said Fanny. "Those who have never seen the New Testament know all doctrine by that teaching. The apostolic teaching of the Church includes every thing. My dear parents lived in bad times for learning in this country. My mother could not read, but my father read very well. Books were very expensive then; they never saw a New Testament in English till they were very old. It was a holy pleasure for him to read and for her to listen; but they found no teaching there that they had not both of them well learned before."

There was silence for a minute; then Fanny began again.

"My little Mary also answered you, that you were bound *not* to have your own thoughts about Holy Scripture; that you must take it according to the teaching of the Church."

"Yes; so she did, I remember."

"It is a thing for you to consider," said Fanny, "that you can't positively know the meaning of Scripture except by the Catholic Church. It is

the false translation and interpretation made by Protestants of Holy Scripture that has caused all sects to quote it as their authority, and yet to differ among themselves to so absurd a degree. This it is that makes men infidels, and reasonably so."

"Ah," said I, "it comes back to the old question of the Church. Is there a Church, and do I believe in her? And if I do believe in her, have I any right to say that I will take part of her teaching as true, and not listen to the other part?"

"Yes," said Fanny, "it is all a question of whether or not there is a Church."

"But *where* is this Church?" I said.

"With *us*," said Fanny. "With us you will find a Church which answers to your description of her; and *nowhere else*." It all seemed to sink into my mind as if it could not be any thing else but true. God had spoken *once*, and His voice was in the Church. I knew that I ought to listen to it. Why did I not? The love of money was upon me. I said to myself again, "I will join the Church as soon as I have made my thousand pounds—then I will join the Church; and I am sure I shall convert Ellen; my dear, beautiful, innocent Lizzie, she too shall be a Catholic; and I will see her grow daily in beauty of heart and soul as she increases in beauty of person; and I shall be above the world in money; and I will leave our village, and settle near some great town, and live an easy life in my trade, or do a little farming, and comfort my body and save my soul both together." Thus I would have my God do all for me; but I was not willing to suffer any thing for Him. And yet that merciful God, who had taught

me so much, did not leave me without a lesson and an example which should have taught me better. Just before I was returning home, after a visit to John, who was now out of danger, I said to Fanny,

"Has the fire injured your property very much?"

"Very much," she said, solemnly.

"To what amount?" I asked.

"Well, Joe, we are not *quite* ruined; but that is all."

I was dreadfully shocked.

"What are you going to do?"

"We must leave this part of the country—we must try to get into something for a living; but we know nothing for certain yet."

To make this matter short, let me tell you that it was soon found out that, by the time the remains of their property on the farm was sold, they would perhaps be worth fifty pounds when all debts and expenses should be paid. They had kept the full extent of their loss from my knowledge till I was quite recovered. My injuries were chiefly on the muscular part of the arm. Fanny knew that a baker's business required a strong arm, and she feared lest anxiety of mind should produce fever, and prevent my complete recovery; but now that I was well, there was no concealment. Corn, hay, and out-houses, which they were obliged to keep in order, had been destroyed. A cow and two calves had died, and one having put its shoulder out in a terrified leap, had had to be killed. All the farm implements, except the wagon and a plough, were in a great measure destroyed, at least

rendered useless; and except the furniture I had seen in the yard, the greater part of which was injured and broken, all was lost. It was ruin indeed!

I could not *then* understand the spirit in which they bore this trial. Even *now* I look back upon it with a sort of thankful wonder.

They were acutely alive to their loss, and saw the disadvantage that must attach to the children by their beginning life again in a lower position; but still, with all and above all was the thought of God and their own souls.

*To suffer well*, so that the soul should gain where the body lost—that seemed the ruling idea.

As God had permitted it, so they took it; and though it was a great trial, *they would not make a misery of it*. The presence of God—His power, His will, His love; that they were His children; that they could never be forgotten; that He knew their hearts, and that He expected them to take this trial, severe as it was, *willingly*,—these things were never out of their minds. And they set to obey God; and obedience to His will and to what He had permitted was, they said, the service that God at that moment expected of them for His honour and glory. Theirs was not mere resignation, but a willingness—really a *willingness*—to suffer, and a fixed belief that in taking this cross properly they should benefit their souls.

So every hour, even to my poor worldly heart, this trial seemed to be turning into a blessing; and this loss of all things on earth to a purifying preparation for the enjoyment of all things in heaven.

Also in my proud, grasping, money-loving heart

there was a bitter thought of the *disgrace* of poverty; but in their hearts there was not an idea of that kind. Jesus had *chosen* poverty,—could any Christian *dare* to repine at being placed in the same path that He had trod?

I was quite staggered by their faith. It was as if my reasoning powers fell down humbled before their holy souls; and though I couldn't be as they were, I knew that they were right.

Once I was sitting with John at the hospital; Fanny was there and the children. She was cutting garments for the children from some calico which had been charitably sent to her (as they had lost nearly all their own clothes), and fitting hems and seams for the two eldest girls to sew. John was a clever man in his farming line, and a practical one. He was talking to me of some new sort of grass; and then he went on to some new way that had been written about of making ricks. On he went; but I heard only a word here and there. I was thinking to myself that these people were, to look at, just like other decent people, and yet that with them there was a wonderful strength; that faith, and love, and a sure hope seemed to tie up their souls to heaven, and to unite them to God as with a chain which nothing could break.

I told John what I was thinking of; and he smiled, and said that he thought it no bad idea.

"And can nothing separate a Catholic from God?" I asked.

"No *trial*—no trial, certainly," said John quickly; for he guessed that I was thinking of their trouble. "Trial," he said, "is meant to part us from earth—not, Joe, to part us from God."

“What, then, can part you from God?”

John smiled. “Come here, baby,” he said to the youngest child, whose life I had saved, and who, though seven years old, was still called by that name; “come here and tell Joe what it is that parts a Catholic from his God.”

“Only sin,” said the little child.

“And sin, Joe, can be forgiven, if repented of,” added John, pressing his child to his breast.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### GOD'S WORK AND MAN'S DELAY.

**T**WAS at home again. My wife and child had heard all I had to tell about the Fairfields. Dear Lizzie had asked a great deal about their religion, and I had told her a great deal; for you know, dear reader, that I intended her to be a Catholic one day, and I was willing to prepare her mind for the thing.

But did *I* become a Catholic? No; I believed all the religion; I think that I believed it all. Even when, before I left the Fairfields, I asked how they got strength for behaving as they did, and they answered, "Our strength is in the Blessed Sacrament—Jesus, the true bread that comes down from heaven—Jesus, who gives Himself for the life of the world;"—even when they told me of the Real Presence, and that it was His delight so to dwell with men, and that their strength was in Him;—even when they spoke and answered thus, *I believed them*. Yes, I believed it all; and did I not become a Catholic? did I not unite myself to that One Church with which Jesus dwells? No, I did not; for I was the slave of the world, the slave of money, and I said to myself again and again, "By and by; but *not yet*."

A year passed away; my dear lovely daughter was past sixteen. She was certainly very beautiful; and she was so free from conceit and pride, it was the delight of my heart to look at her and think about her. She was very clever too ; and though I still *talked* of her taking to the pastry-cook's business, I intended in my heart to work and save till I could make her quite independent of labour. But, as I have said, the girl had no pride; she helped her mother and helped me; she kept accounts, and made light pastry. Early in the morning her sweet voice was heard in the garden as she picked flowers to dress the counter with; and it seemed to me, that whatever she put her hand to took a form of beauty and grace which no one else could have given to it. She was so light-hearted; her face had a lovely smile for ever upon it ; and she was so gentle and kind and attentive, so feeling, so loving, so good and obliging, there was no one in the village or neighbourhood who did not admire her; and I have seen many a rude boy touch his hat as he looked at her, as if he could not help respecting the goodness and beauty that beamed upon him from that dear girl's young face. I used to say to myself, " She wants nothing but the Catholic faith to be an angel upon earth;" and *that* I would not give to her—*not yet!* Time went on, and I heard from the Fairfields. They had gone to live in a large town, and John had opened a flour-shop; he sold on commission for a miller. Fanny only said that *they were earning their bread*, and that the children were free scholars at a nuns' school. Six months more passed; the flour-shop was given up; John had got a place in a large

seed-merchant's establishment; as he was a good judge of such produce, she hoped he would get on. She took in clear-starching; little Mary was old enough to help her; still, they were only earning their bread.

But I had greater events to tell to Fanny. My dear little girl was gone to Paris with the family of Hill Grove. They had been very kind to her, and always interested in her improvement. They wanted some one to help to teach the younger children, and who would sit with the housekeeper and the young ladies' maid when the children were with the governess. My dear child was to see the great sights of Paris, and she was to learn French: it was a tempting offer, and the girl longed to go; so I parted with her a few weeks after her seventeenth birthday.

Lizzie was away three months; and when she came back, there was so pretty a change in her I can't describe it; but I loved and admired her more than ever, and more than ever I was set upon earning riches to endow her with. I began to think that I must make *more* than a thousand pounds before I became a Catholic; and yet whenever I thought this, a sharp pang shook my heart; I knew that I was sinning.

After this Lizzie used to be a great deal at Hill Grove—sometimes for a week, sometimes for a month at a time; and so it went on till another year began its course, and Lizzie seemed tired of her gay life, and said she would stay at home. She did stay at home for two or three months, but I thought she pined for variety, and I wondered that she refused so many invitations from her kind friends. .

But in the spring the Hill Grove family asked her to go to London with them. I at first refused; but Lizzie entreated me with such painful earnestness to let her go, that I gladly asked leave to unsay my refusal. She went. I recollect now the vigour and unnatural elation with which she prepared her clothes and packed up her things. She went. She went; and as I returned from taking her to Hill Grove, I put into the bank the last twenty pounds of that thousand which I had promised myself to make before I became a Catholic. I wrote to Fanny, and told her that as soon as my child returned from London I should be a Catholic. The letter was returned to me from the dead-letter office—Fanny was not to be found.

I determined to write to the priests at Morton, to ask about the Fairfields; but they knew nothing about them. The newspapers had ceased to come to me for some time. I made another attempt; I enclosed a letter, with a note to the post-office master at what had last been the Fairfields' post-town. I received an obliging answer from him, saying that the seed-merchant whom John had served had failed, and that he did not know where Mr. and Mrs. Fairfield were gone. I wrote to the convent where Fanny had said that her girls went to school; I received an answer from the priest, saying, that they well remembered the family, but could not give me any information about them.

And all this while my proud perverse heart was saying, that I could not be a Catholic till I could talk or write to the Fairfields. Of course, it was only a snare, a contrivance of Satan to draw my thoughts away from my soul; but so it was; and

day after day, week after week, month after month passed away, till the summer was over, and we were expecting every post to hear of the return of our long-absent child.

In looking back to this time I *now* feel that I had not got, neither had I then ever prayed to obtain, a true real horror of sin. I think that *that* was at the bottom of my coldness. I had not examined my heart enough to feel myself as guilty in God's sight as I undoubtedly was. There was a terrible awakening to come.

I shall pass over my trial as quickly as I can; yet I can assure you that every occurrence, almost every thought of that time, is still present to my mind, and will never leave it in this life.

I was busy at my kneading-tub; I had my hands in the dough, my paper cap on my head, my shirt-sleeves rolled tightly up to my shoulders, and my large apron tied firmly round me. I was very busy, and I was singing at my work with, all things considered, a very satisfied heart.

My wife ran to me with a small parcel in her hand, "Sent by express," she said, "sent by express from Moncton. It came down as a mail-parcel to the post-master, with orders to forward it instantly to you. The man was paid—he came on horse-back—he is gone."

My heart trembled. "Open it, Ellen," I said.

She did so. It contained a letter from the gentleman of Hill Grove. He wrote from London. A ten-pound note fell out of the letter as Ellen opened it. I saw by her face that she could not speak. She only stared upon the open page, and held it to me. But I did not look at the letter; I

only looked on that most wretched mother's face. I almost thought it was death—so ashy were her lips, and her nostrils so blue, and her poor panting heart almost stifling her as she stood by my side, and, holding me tight by the arm, fixed her glassy eyes upon my face with a gaze of helpless misery.

The letter only bade me come to London directly: it said that a terrible illness had fallen upon Lizzie; that, not knowing how I might be placed respecting ready money, the bank-note was sent to enable me to start directly.

Already my poor Ellen had begun to prepare me for the journey. In her cold speechless way she had begun to wash my hands and wipe them in her apron. She was dusting the flour from my clothes, and looking at me in such an agonised way, every glance seemed to beg me to be gone, and hear the worst.

My heart was throbbing with misery, and how guilty I felt!

All my sins were rising up before me; but worst of all the sin of having stayed so long away from God's pardoning love, and of having kept my child out of the Church of Christ. I dreaded that she should die out of the fold of the Good Shepherd. The dread of this fell upon me with an anguish which I would not describe to you even if I could.

I went to London. I got to the house. I was directed elsewhere. I went as directed to a small house in a retired street. I found the door open; I entered, went upstairs, stood at a bed-room's open door, and saw my child. She lay there on the bed—she lay there in her grave-clothes—she was dead!

And at the side of that bed, as I entered the room, knelt two persons, a man and a woman, John and Fanny Fairfield. And these persons had been thrust about from one place to another, until, in the wonderful providence of God, they had got to London, where the prayer that Fanny had uttered as I saved her child's life could be granted—“ In the hour of death and in the day of judgment, remember him, O Lord.”

I stood at that door motionless and speechless; but a spring of joy had opened in my heart, and I felt its life through my whole frame. That terrible dread was gone. There she lay dead; but on her breast a bright white lily-flower, and in her hands a crucifix. I did not look upon her face, though I loved it so much, but on that emblem of purity, on that confession of faith. I stood there and was glad.

Fanny's story was soon told. She had first seen Lizzie about three weeks before, when, having heard that the Hill Grove family were in London, she had called at the house to see an old servant.

Lizzie had been delighted to see her, had talked about the fire at Old Farm, and had visited their house to see John and the children; she had visited them several times, and had always talked of '*the old religion*,' the name I used to give to the Catholic faith when I talked to her.

She would see the children's books and pictures, and make them tell her of the lives of the saints. Her tender heart seemed never to tire of high and holy thoughts; and from my own experience of the Fairfields, I knew how much she might learn from them.

Then she told Fanny that she was very sorry that she had begged me to let her go to London. It was not good, she said, for a young girl in her station to see so much of the excitement of the world; that she had thought so once before, when she had refused to go to Hill Grove; and that she wished she had had the courage to stay at home.

Then my good friend Fanny did a mother's part by the child, and won her young heart to listen to holy words of purity and humility, and of love to God.

After this Fanny was walking in the street. She met three persons; a young lady, a woman-servant, and my dear child. Lizzie seemed to be stopping to speak to her, but she staggered and fell at her feet, as if in a fit. She was taken into a shop, a carriage was called, and a doctor sent for. She *would* go back with Fanny. The doctor said that she must not be agitated by a refusal; so she went, and in Fanny's house she died.

I was confounded and astonished. I was cast down at the feet of the Judge of all men. I was wonderstruck at His power, and silent beneath His chastisement; for the girl had been received into the Church, and, fortified by the last Sacraments, her soul had gone forth to Him whose words of mercy, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," have never left the earth, nor lost their power in it.

Thus, ready for life, she had met death; and God, to whom I would not bring my child, had taken her in His own way.

How different it might have been with a child of whom I had taken so little real care! I felt my-

self in God's presence convicted of unforgiven sins, and I scarcely dared be sorrowful.

Before the night came I had entered on the way of the Church, with a firm purpose of amendment. I had begun my contrite confession. The words I had so often read, as if they were dead and had nothing to do with the men of these days,—the words, "whose sins ye remit, they are remitted,"—had become to me full of life and meaning. I was acting on my belief of their truth, and I was experiencing their power.





## CHAPTER IX.

¶. Pray for us, O holy Mother of God;

¶. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

  
JOHN FAIRFIELD went to my wife. She came with him to London. The shock was so great that she had a frightful brain-fever, and for several weeks I watched her, once more trembling for a soul which I had kept in ignorance.

All the Catholics about us joined in a nine days' prayer for her recovery, and then in another nine days' prayer for her conversion; and their prayers were heard. Before six months were over Ellen was a Catholic, and a very happy one.

But I must go back to my child. I went to the house of our friends who had been so kind to her, as soon as the funeral was over. It required some courage to visit them; but I had written a note to fix the time, and I kept the appointment.

I was shown up into the drawing-room. The gentleman and lady were both there, and no one else. They looked cold and grave.

"Mr. Baker, we are sorry for your trouble; but of course we feel ourselves ill-used on finding that we have so long had a concealed Catholic in our family," said the gentleman.

I harrowed my own feelings by going into particulars to explain to him that he was mistaken; but I might as well have tried to convince the marble tables. It is ten years ago, and I can laugh at it now; but there was a perverse determination to think us in the wrong, because we were Catholics, which I can never forget. However, I thanked him for his kindness to Lizzie.

"If she was happy here, I am glad. I hope I may never have to repent of having her; no one knows the harm she may have done my children!"

I explained it all over again.

"I cannot," said the lady, "imagine her motive for concealing her religious feelings so long—there must have been some very strong motive—perhaps in the end it actually killed her!"

I explained the circumstances all over again. It was of no use.

"I should like you to be candid with me, Mr. Baker," said the gentleman. "Did the poor girl ever admit a priest into this house?"

I was quite angry.

"Have I not told you, sir, several times how every thing happened? How could the dear child admit a priest into this house when she never knew one?"

"Don't be displeased," he answered. "You must excuse me for saying so much; but in this religion there are so many ways of deceiving"—

"Sir!" I cried out, "I am a Catholic; I am here to thank you for past favours to my child; I won't hear my religion abused."

"It is evidently a conspiracy from beginning to end," said the gentleman.

"So young and pleasant, and yet so artful—she paid for it with her life," said the lady. "Some priest *must* have advised her—it is too dreadful! But how a father could encourage her in such conduct—oh, Mr. Baker!"

"Well, madam," I said, "tell the story as you please, but remember you tell what isn't true."

"Sir, we have evidence of what we say," said the gentleman. "You had better go, Mr. Baker."

"I am going, sir. Please to take back this ten-pound note. I must say you sent it very thoughtfully." I threw the note on the table and left the room ; and I heard them say as I went out—"Quite a conspiracy—priestcraft—what dangers surround us!—these papists are every where, undermining family peace, and"—I was gone! But the untruths had been born and spoken—that story was not to be lost. So, years afterwards, it was told to me as a proof of the double-dealing wickedness of Catholics, by a person who did not know how nearly I was concerned in the matter. The story was so changed, that I did not know it at first; but suspicions arose, and, by a few questions, I was convinced that my child and myself were the persons spoken of.

I felt angry, and tried with great eagerness to set the person right ; but the laughter of John Fairfield and his children I can never forget. He limped up and down the room, for he was very lame, speaking between loud bursts of laughter: "Don't try to set it right—save your breath—you are giving foundation for a new story—be wiser, Joe Baker—it's impossible to convince a Protestant—this very man will tell it all again to-morrow!"

I took John's advice—the man went away like one bewildered. But Fairfield was right—within a month the story was told at a Protestant meeting by an itinerant Presbyterian doctor, and published in the paper. This paper was kept by John Fairfield, and he still laughs at the slightest sight of it; but I cannot help sorrowing, for there is certainly something awful in this willingness to bear false witness against the Church of Christ.

When all things in London were settled and my wife was recovered, I left her and went to our old home, to close my business there and make preparations for leaving the place. The Fairfields joined us in wishing not to part ever again if we could help it. It was the occasion of many thoughts and prayers—of many offerings to God of good confessions and holy communions as far as we were able. At last John heard of a very good place for himself. His father had been a miller as well as a farmer, and John knew the mill-business very well. He heard of an old man—a Catholic—who having lately lost his only son, wanted a steady trustworthy person to carry on the business for him. It turned out very happily; and John, Fanny, and the children went to Woodside Mill to live with the proprietor, on terms something like those I had made in days gone by with my old master the baker.

Ellen and I went to see them.

In the village of Woodside there was a man of my trade who wished to give up business. I bought the goodwill of the shop from him, and settled at Woodside myself, not more than half a mile from the mill. There we are living now

very happily; for there is a Catholic church just beyond the village, and joined on to it a house where good men live who have left the world for the purpose of doing God's work only—a monastery.

Many a pleasant scene I have witnessed at this place. At Woodside Mill there is a holy old age in William Bentley, John's good master. A trusting, happy, humble, and love-seeking smile is on his fine old face, and many scores of prayers pour forth from his faithful heart every day. He is old, and he knows that there cannot be much time between this life and eternity with him; so he lives in a watchful preparation for death, and strives industriously to increase the sum of his good works. He is very fond of the *children*, as he calls John's young women, for the girls are grown up now; and when he sees the eldest, with her arm through her lover's, walking up and down under the shadow of the yew-tree hedge, he weeps for joy.

The young man is Mr. Bentley's nephew, and has always led a Christian life. He is the finest young man in the parish,—the strongest, bravest, and most active; and for his station, one of the best educated. He is a holy youth; he has dedicated his heart to the Heart of Jesus, and he does not pretend to give to God a heart full of unrepented sin, because he knows that such a heart He cannot accept. He frequents God's Sacraments with earnestness and love, and adds to his constant endeavours unceasing prayers for final perseverance. He is a man walking the world with his soul as his best treasure, surrounded by saints and angels, and with his eyes fixed on his Saviour,

and now he has chosen a holy woman for his wife, and all hearts approve and ask for blessings on them.

But I must again go back. Another wonder was to be performed in the person of Bill Maple, my wife's brother. Of course he had lived with us at Woodside. He was a good hard-working boy, very fond of his sister, and with an admiring kind of grateful love for me; but still he was nothing more than a good-hearted affectionate sort of slave. He was sixteen years of age. Ellen began a great work with him. It was to get him away from these slavish feelings—to make him feel that as the possessor of a soul, purchased by the Saviour's blood, he was a responsible being in this world, and had a great duty which he owed to himself, and a great debt to pay to God.

Religion came to that boy as an honour, as a promise of great reward, and as something which was to raise him in this world above the common sinners he had seen so much of; and yet without pride, or harsh judgment, or presumption, but all through God's love, and a penetrating humility which casts the soul at the Saviour's feet, and receives from His hands the cleansing it desires.

The boy's heart received his sister's teaching in a wonderful way; perhaps because she never ceased to pray for him, and to entreat our Blessed Lady that she would be the refuge of this poor untaught sinner, and take him for her son.

I could hardly believe my own experience when I felt that boy becoming the delight of my heart. He began to serve God with his whole soul; every day I used to say with respect to him, "We are

sinful souls, O Lord! unto Thy name be the glory."

Now that three years have passed away, and I see Bentley and Mary Fairfield walking by that yew-tree hedge, I also sometimes see this boy—or rather man, for he is twenty-five—walking near them and talking to Anna, whose life I saved at Old Farm. Then I say to John Fairfield, how glad we shall be to have young Bentley as a partner at the mill; and I add to this that my business would support another married man, and look towards Anna and Maple, and we consent that it shall be so, if the young people please.

As to Catherine Fairfield, the second girl, she does not think of marriage; she will stay with her parents as long as they want her, but her soul seems to have a vocation above this world.

But I must not let you suppose, my readers, that I have never seen any thing but joy and peace at Woodside. Woodside is in this world, and in a very trying country of this world, a country full of bad example and strong temptation. I have seen very terrible things at Woodside.

I have seen young Catholics neglect their religion, leave their religion, turn to sin, and lead bad lives; and I have seen only a few of these return to God.

I have seen Catholics of full age, who have long, and with tolerable steadiness, received the Sacraments, turn aside from holiness, lose their morals, lose their faith; and of these I have seen only one or two return to God. I have not seen all this at Woodside, but I have observed it as I have looked on the Catholic Church in this country.

It fills the soul with sorrow and fear; for there is no thought so dreadful as the thought of a lost Catholic. But it does not shake one's faith. God never promised that all Catholics should be saved; He said, "watch and pray," and bade us repeat, "lead us not into temptation." He warned us against the broad way of destruction, and told us to keep to the straight and narrow path: it is the way of the Church, from which no one ought to turn aside; it is the way of the Sacraments, which should never be neglected.

But there is, even in this country, consolation for the sad thought of straying sinners; and one morning this consolation came very strongly home to me.

It was a day of devotion. We had been, all of us, to an early Mass. I was coming out of church with John Fairfield, when some one touched my shoulder; I looked round, and there stood a gentleman of about forty years of age perhaps, yet with many grey stripes among his bright black hair, and he looked at me with the pleasantest face I ever saw. I had no idea who he was.

"Mr. Baker?" he said.

"Yes, sir,—Joseph Baker; but I don't know you, sir."

"Not know me! Well, I know you, and have been seeking you every where; I have been threading the streets of London for you for a fortnight past, and now I come on you by accident. I am at the monastery; I came there last night; I never thought of asking for you there—but how glad I am to see you!"

As he spoke, I seemed to recollect something of

who he was, or who he ought to be; but I was very puzzled.

"It isn't Mr. Knight?" said I, doubtfully.

"But it is," he said, and laughed merrily.

"And a Catholic, sir?" I exclaimed.

"Yes, yes—why not? Didn't you give me the Penny Catechism?"

I laughed in my turn now.

"Where's John Fairfield?" asked Mr. Knight, "the man who spoke up so well for holy Mother Church in your shop, I must see him; I intend to travel any distance to see that man."

"You need not go far;—there, sir, that lame man with the scars on his face—that is Fairfield."

"My dear friend, what dreadful accident has happened to you?"

John knew Mr. Knight in a moment. They stood looking at each other with their hands clasped together like the dearest friends.

They began to speak both at once; Mr. Knight to tell John how often he had thought of his words in my house; but John to say, "We praise Thee O God! we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord. Full are the heavens and the earth of the majesty of Thy glory. Thee the holy Church throughout the world doth acknowledge."

Then Mr. Knight told us that he was going to stay at the monastery, to try, as he said, to be a religious, if God would accept of one who had turned aside from His inviting voice so long; but first he stayed some time as a guest.

During this time Mary and Bentley were married. Now when Mr. Knight knew that there was to be a wedding in Fairfield's family, it is not

to be told what a delight he took in it; he would have all the management of things himself. His free and pleasant manners made all the village love him; and he told every body that he owed John Fairfield a debt, and would try to pay it in his own way.

All sorts of nice things, but sensible things too, came down for Mary, and quite a library of excellent books for Bentley.

Bentley and Mary were to make a three days' devotion before their marriage, and to receive holy Communion early on the morning of the wedding-day. Of course, all who were related to them, or bound to them by any ties of affection, remembered them in their prayers during those three days.

A number of young girls were with Kate and Anna when I entered the church on the first of these days for the early Mass. I had had a slow and thoughtful walk to church. The air was warm and balmy, the birds were singing sweetly, and the hedges were full of violets and primroses; I was saying to myself that hymn which begins

“ Mother of mercies, day by day  
My love for thee grows more and more ;”

and thinking how much all women owed to her, and how natural it seemed to come to man to cherish and take care of women generally, for her dear sake.

When I got into the church I saw all these young girls, as I have said. They were handing flowers and garlands to Mr. Knight, who was arranging them at the feet of the most beautiful representation of the Blessed Virgin that I ever

beheld. It was an image of white stone, with such a countenance of dignity and purity as I cannot describe. I stood in deep admiration for a moment, and then knelt down to pray.

Mr. Knight had given this beautiful image to the church at this time as an expression of his thankfulness for the mercies he had received, and of his recollection of John Fairfield's last words to him in my house : “ I have spoken a few words for holy Mother Church this day; *and I pray the Blessed Virgin you may never forget it.*” When he told John and Fanny, they were so happy; I do not think that he could have done any thing to gratify them more.

This image in the church seemed to make Mary and Bentley's three days of prayer into a time of public devotion. All the village visited the church, I think; and many young people, men and women, had got some pleasant thing to repeat which Mr. Knight had said to them as he met them going in or out.

There was a renewed feeling in people's minds that a sure way to make a holy choice, and lead a faithful, happy life, such as God would approve, was to commend themselves heartily to the patronage of the holy Virgin of Virgins—the most pure, the most chaste, the Virgin most powerful, the vessel of singular devotion, the immaculate Mother of God; and certainly it was with greatly increased fervour that we said to her, “ Turn on us those merciful eyes of thine, and after this our exile show us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus.”

So in this way was John and Fanny Fairfield's eldest daughter married. I do not think that Wil-

liam Maple and Anna will make a less edifying wedding. I can assure you that we danced no less lightly, eat no less wedding-cake, and wished not fewer blessings to the newly-married pair, for having approached the marriage as the witnesses of a sacrament, and for not forgetting, as a Catholic can never forget, that the best way to make a light heart is to keep a clean conscience, and hold fast the faith of the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.



LONDON :

PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,  
Great New Street and Fetter Lane.

# LUCY WARD;

OR,

## The Dweller in the Tabernacle.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

THE LEGEND OF BLESSED IMELDA,

OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC.



LONDON:

BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET.

SPAIN, PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

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1854.

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**PRINTED BY ROBSON, LEVEY, AND FRANKLYN,**  
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# LUCY WARD;

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### CHAPTER I.

#### THE HOLY SACRIFICE.

**E**RE they are! Here come the convent girls, Nat!" cried a lounging tunneller to one of his mates, who, like himself, was leaning against the convent-wall, and enjoying the excellent joke of ridiculing all those who were coming up the hill to High Mass. " Poor things! Look at 'em, with their eyes down and their heads poking! What a precious lot of slows, to be sure!"

" Why, how can they help it, Rogers?" returned Nat Swinyard, gazing listlessly at the modest-looking monitresses, who, with their mistress, were walking two and two from the schools to High Mass in the public chapel. " How can they help it, I should like to know? Arn't they kept in chains all day, and lashed besides, and fastened up

at night like cows in a stall-house? Let us burn the convent, say I, and pull those black old nuns, with their wicked doings, out of their holes!"

This valiant declaration of war against a few harmless and innocent women was received with sundry exclamations of delight and approval; but an open-faced and pleasant-looking artisan, who had hitherto leaned in silence against the convent-wall, looked up and said, "Well now, if I were to speak a piece of my mind, I should say those nuns were good women, and their girls good girls. The nuns are hard at work all day, and take children to the schools for nothing; and as to the girls, they are surely none the worse for being clean and tidy, and not bold and blowsy as the town-girls are. I am sure, for my part, when I see your brick-yard girls fighting and swearing in the dirt, I've wished many a time they went to the convent school."

"Oh, crikey! Here's a Solomon for you!" cried Swinyard, roused out of his lounging listlessness by the chance of a "row." "Why, boys, he's one of the Pope's own! Let us tie him up mast-high, and have a good look at the Papist! Now for it, boys! Here goes! No Popery for ever!"

A few loud and shrill cries of "Drown the Papist!" "Down with the old Pope!" "Burn the wicked black nuns!" ran along the line of gazers; but Ward, the young carpenter, who had already spoken so freely, came boldly forward and said very quietly, "Now you know very well that you are all talking nonsense; I am not a Papist at all, as you know very well too. And as for the Pope, he is a thousand miles away in Rome, and what

harm does your shouting do him here? And besides, we should all, perhaps, be wiser if, instead of making such a fuss about what I, for one, don't understand, we were to take the trouble to learn what Popery is, and maybe we should find some things different to what we expect. It is not like an Englishman, to my mind, to be always crying down what we know nothing about."

The plain good sense of Ward's words, and the quiet, manly way in which they were uttered, seemed to throw a damp upon the "No-Popery" fire. Rogers and Swinyard muttered some unintelligible words about "fine scholarship," and slunk away; and very soon after the whole line of idle jesters at the convent-porch dispersed in different directions. As the last bell rung for Mass, the great gates of the convent were thrown open by the bedell, and Ward, with two others, sauntered up to the chapel-door. It was a new scene to all of the three; and though two of them were there merely to gratify the passing curiosity of the vacant Sunday hours, Ward had a different and a better motive for coming, and he observed every thing he saw with great attention.

At the entrance, he saw that every one, whatever might be his state, age, or condition, dipped a finger reverently in the holy-water vase, and making the sign of the Cross with a genuflexion, quietly went to his place. Ward saw that they looked to the altar as they knelt; but whether they knelt to the crucifix over the altar, to that curious little painted and gilded church on the altar, or to the altar itself, he could not tell. One thing, however, was certain. Whether they were

idolators or not, they were certainly praying. There could be no mistake about that. There was old Barny the match-man thumping his breast as if he would break it in, with the tears running down his furrowed cheeks all the time. There were Mrs. Annesley and the merry little Miss Annesleys, with their heads bent down over their books, as quiet and grave as could be. There was Sir Herbert and young Mr. Giffard, who always looked so fine and gay on the parade, with his thorough-bred horses; now he seemed quite another man; he never looked round, nor even moved his head. There sat great rough M'Donnell,—Giant M'Donnell as they called him,—and Keemer and Stokes the tunnellers, washed and shaved, and reading devoutly and attentively their "Prayers before Mass." And that learned scholar from Oxford, who, he had heard, had written so many clever books, was now actually telling his beads with evident devotion, just like any old popish beggar-woman in Spain or Italy. Nay, even that laughing, shouting, ever-noisy and ever-restless urchin, Charlie Hughes, was nestling under his mother's elbow, with his great black eyes fixed upon the candles, as still and quiet and good as if he had been tied to her apron-string all the week. No, there could be no mistake. However silly and deluded all this variety of people might be, they were certainly praying. They were worshipping Almighty God; they *looked* as if they loved and desired to please Him.

The service now began; and the watchful bedell, observing that he seemed at a loss, soon brought Ward a prayer-book, which to his surprise, was

in English, and had an English name. It was called *The Golden Manual*; and as he turned over the leaves, it seemed to him that the prayers were very beautiful, and just fit to address to Almighty God; such as he had often thought in his own mind, but could never put into words himself. What surprised him most of all was, that wherever he turned, he found the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, and all hope and confidence ascribed to the efficacy of His Most Precious Blood. "How can these people be called Anti-Christian," he repeated again and again to himself, "when their prayers are so full of the name of Christ, and the Cross, and thoughts of the Blood of Christ redeeming us? I think more and more that they are belied, or at least not well understood. Why, at least I thought there would be plenty about the Pope in their prayers; but I cannot see any thing at all about him, except just this one little prayer for our Sovereign Pontiff N.; which I suppose stands for his name. Perhaps, after all, he is only their bishop; and we have bishops ourselves."

In this way Ward went through the early part of the Mass. Next came a pause in the singing, which he had felt was very pleasant, and helped him on in his prayers and thoughts; and then the priest turned round and began to address the people from the altar. First he gave out the festivals and saints'-days for the week, and then he read the Epistle and Gospel in English. Ward listened; it was clearly out of the Bible, part of the same Gospel of St. John which he knew so well; for Ward had been to a good school, and was well acquainted with the New Testament. The sermon

followed. It was a very plain and simple explanation of the Gospel, practically addressed to the consciences of the congregation, and all tending to excite in them a hatred of sin and a greater desire to love and serve Almighty God, so as to become more perfect and pleasing to him. Ward thought he had never seen the ingratitude of sin so plainly, nor heard his duty as a Christian man so clearly laid before him. At the end, the priest spoke of our Blessed Lady, and in a few energetic but very sweet and simple words alluded to the feast of Christmas that was just approaching; and pointed out how impossible it was not to love the Mother of Jesus, who bore Him in her arms, who cradled Him in the manger at Bethlehem, and shared all the smiles and tears and the sweet and sad privations of His holy childhood. "Then," concluded he, "how can we separate the sweet name of Mary from the life-giving and Holy Name of Jesus? The shepherds found Jesus in the arms of Mary; when they came to adore Him, they paid also their humble reverence to Mary. They loved Jesus; could they refuse their love to Mary too? They asked new graces and blessings of Jesus; did they not ask Mary also not to forget them in her prayers, and to intercede for them with her beloved Son? They could not separate the Mother and her Son. Let us then love to join these names of Jesus and Mary: let us, too, fly to the manger, and we shall there 'find the Child with his Mother'—Jesus and Mary together at Bethlehem."

"Is this the way they *always* talk, I wonder?" said Ward to himself; "or is it only for us? But that is a foolish thought; for I did not even know

myself that I was coming. Well, I'm sure they say many things about Papists that are not true. But what is it to be now, I wonder?" It was the priest sitting down during the singing of the creed, and soon after came the offertory. "I wonder," thought Ward, "if this is the money they pay for Confessions, or what? and as the bedell passed him, he whispered to him, "What is the money in this plate for?"

"The Offertory is always given to the poor," replied the man, who was passing Ward as being a Protestant. Ward, however, took out twopence and put into the plate; and then as the people all immediately after knelt down, he did the same. A small bell rang, and every head was instantly bent in prayer. Ward then saw the priest stoop low before the altar; another bell rang, and all seemed to become so very still and solemn, that he felt as if he were really in heaven, and before the very face of God. A rush of awe came over him; but it was a very sweet and holy feeling too. Twice—three times—the bell rang, with a very soft and silvery sound, before this solemn stillness ceased; and when Ward lifted up his head he felt, to his surprise, that his own eyes were filled with tears, and saw that many of the congregation were wiping theirs. The words that came into Ward's mind during the Elevation were these: "O my God! I do not know Thee at all. I am a poor man, and I have done a great many things that are wrong. I am very sorry for all my sins. But I am not happy either. I feel as if the world were full of darkness, and I astray in it. I do not know what is true and what is not true. Tell me what

is truth, and let me know and live with Thee." For the first time in his life Ward had really prayed, and he felt his heart lightened of a great weight. When Mass was over, he considered for a few moments as he sat in his place, and then going up to the bedell, he asked him if he thought he could get him the loan of the prayer-book which had been lent him. The bedell said he would ask Father Ashurst, and let him know. Presently he came again and beckoned Ward into the sacristy, where the calm and benevolent-looking priest was just unvested. " You wish to borrow this prayer-book, my good friend?" he said; and his clear strong voice sounded like that of a friend.

" Yes, sir, if it is not making too bold."

" It is not making bold at all," replied the priest pleasantly; " but as you are a stranger, will you have the goodness to write your name, or may I write it for you?"

" I am not much of a scholar, sir," replied Ward frankly, " but I'll write as I can;" and he wrote on the paper, " Matthew Ward, Gorham Road, St. Lewis."

" And when you have kept the Manual as long as you wish, you will be so good as to tell me what you think of it," said Father Ashurst, smiling; " and if you find any thing you do not quite make out, come to me, and I shall be glad to explain it to the best of my power."

" Thank you, sir," Ward heartily replied; and then, after a moment's hesitation, he said: " You could do me a great favour now, sir, if you would. Could you get for me to speak with one of the ladies at the convent?"

"If you have any business, no doubt Mother Superior would allow you to do so," replied Father Ashurst, a little surprised. "Do you really wish it now?"

"I do, sir; and I'm sure it's not acting wrong," replied Ward.

Father Ashurst gave one glance at Ward's ingenuous eye, and was satisfied. He went with him to the convent door, spoke a few words to the portress through the wicket, and in a few moments Ward was alone in the convent parlour, which was very simply and neatly furnished, and hung with several fine engravings on holy subjects. Before he had finished looking at all these, two nuns entered; and bowing, without sitting down, the elder one asked Ward, in a sweet and kind voice, if they could do any thing for him. Ward almost started as he found himself face to face with the black veiled sister, whose community had been charged not only with idolatry, but with so many other crimes. Yet the sisters looked so cheerful and kind, as well as calm and modest, that he shook off his vague fears, and said, "Yes, madam, you can do me a favour. I have been so bold as to ask to speak to you myself, partly because I wished to know the truth of some sayings I have heard, and partly for another reason. Will you be pleased to tell me, madam, what the convent girls pay for boarding in the convent?"

The sister answered, that the pension varied according to different circumstances; that some paid 8*l.*, some 12*l.*, and some as much as 18*l.* per annum, if they wished the girls to be well trained and educated as schoolmistresses.

"And are they only Catholic girls," said Ward, "or would you take our girls too?"

The nun replied, that if a Protestant girl of a good character applied, and was willing to submit to the rules, and be obedient and docile to the sisters, they could admit her, and would gladly do so.

"And are the rules very hard?" asked Ward, after a moment's hesitation.

The sisters both smiled, and the one who had all along spoken replied, "The convent-girls do not find them so. They have to get up at a certain hour, to keep silence before Mass, during meals, and in the dormitories, and to obey the sisters in the schools and different offices. These are the chief of the rules they have to observe, except that of not speaking to any one out of the convent without leave and necessity."

"Then, ma'am," said Ward, "the case is this. I could only pay a small sum weekly out of my wages; but I want to put my sister here because I wish to get her out of the way of one or two wild young fellows in the tunnel-work and the Deep Hollow. She is a good girl as ever lived; I will say that for Lucy."

"I cannot say at once that we will take your sister altogether," replied the prudent and experienced sister; "but if you will be so good as to bring Lucy here to see us on Thursday, we would then give you a final answer. I can assure you, it would give us the greatest satisfaction to be of service to you and to her, and we will do the utmost in our power."

Ward took his leave, and drawing a deep breath as he looked back at the convent from the gates,

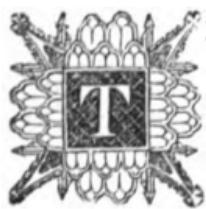
he said, " Well, who would ever have believed it ? I feel as glad that our Lucy should be a convent-girl as if some one had taken her away to give her a great fortune." And as if his mind was relieved from a weary load, he walked away with great strides across the common, whistling merrily as he seemed to chase his lengthening shadow before him.





## CHAPTER II.

### THE SILENT VICTIM.



HERE'S a new girl come," cried Honor Shiel to Cattie Allen, as they were washing up the children's supper-things. "Where will she sleep, I wonder,—in the dormitory?"

"What is her name, Honor?" cried little Mildred Lake. "Is she a Catholic? Is she bigger than you? My! she has such great blue eyes!"

"Hush, Mildred," said Cattie; "your tongue is so long we can't see the end of it."

"Well, but you don't speak, Cattie, yourself," said Honor. "Do you know Lucy is not a Catholic?"

"Yes; I watched her going into the schoolroom with Mother Regis. Mother Regis did so smile at her, and patted her on the head."

"I like her look, too," said Honor; "but I'm sorry she is not a Catholic. We shan't feel so free, and she will perhaps take scandal at us."

"At you, Honor," cried Alice Telford, laughing; "for you scandalise even me sometimes."

"Oh, you're a great saint!" said Honor; "you ought only to be a solitary in the desert of Egypt;

that's all you want to finish you off. And if you were a solitary, you would laugh."

"Yes, I can't help laughing," replied Alice; whose bright innocent eyes laughed outright in confirmation of her word. "I'm so much happier in the convent than I used to be, that I feel glad all day long; and when I wake in the night I laugh too sometimes. I can't think what makes us all so happy."

"It's because we go to confession so often," said Cattie; "and now we have made our first communion, we can go to communion too. Ah, I shall never forget our first communion on the Assumption! I felt that I would like dearly to die then, and go to our Lord for ever."

"But," said the sister who was with them as they cleared away the refectory things—"but would you not rather live for our Lord, and work for Him, and do something to prove your love for Him by teaching others to love Him?"

"Yes, yes, sister," said Magdalen Crawford, who had not yet spoken a word, "yes, that is what *I* should like; for that would be much harder and gain us more merit, would it not?"

"It certainly would," replied Sister Bridget; "we can all of us say, 'Lord, Lord,' and wish we were in heaven. But let us work hard, dear children, and overcome our natural inclinations, and that will gain us a greater crown than empty words;" and as she spoke, the strong-armed and stout-hearted portress took up the heavily-loaded tray, and thus setting them a practical example, made the children follow her with the lighter cups and mugs to their own cupboard in the pantry,

where the cleaner for the week, under her watchful eye, arranged them in neat order upon the shelves.

"And now for recreation," cried little Mildred. "Sister Francis Xavier is coming. Oh, I am so glad, for I love her so much!"

"I wonder who does not!" replied Cattie; "but I love all the sisters. They all tell us the same things. But hush! here she comes."

There was a general rush to the door of the class-room, when the tall slender figure of the nun appeared; but the children paused and hung back when they saw that she was not alone. The "new girl" was with her. She was a slight fragile-looking creature, whose large dark-blue eyes seemed at times to unveil many an inner depth of thought, though generally they were cast down, and shaded by their long-fringed lashes. Her features were calm and transparent as marble; and only now and then a scarcely perceptible shell-like tint passed across them and vanished again.

"Children, I have brought Lucy Ward to you," said Sister Francis Xavier to them. "Magdalen, you will be a kind of guardian angel to her, and tell her what to do when she is at a loss; and when you are not at hand, Alice will take your place. Go, my dear," she continued kindly to Lucy, "and sit between them; and by degrees they will tell you a little about the rules, and where to find what you want."

"But are you not coming to recreation with us, sister?" exclaimed Cattie. "Ah, yes, I see you are, by your quilt and knitting-pins: I am so glad."

The nun then took her place at the head of the

table, round which the children were at work, each with a neat well-filled basket before her; and when Sister Bridget had left the room, she said, "Do you know, dear children, that next Friday is the first Friday in the month, and that we have something very pleasant to look forward to on that day?"

"Oh, I know what it is," cried Honor, "and I am so glad!"

"So do I," said Magdalen, in a low voice; "I had quite forgotten it was next Friday."

"What is it?" said Mildred; "is it the school treat, Sister Xavier?"

"No, dear child, not again so soon. It is a great feast too; but not for the school only, but for us also. We are going to have exposition of the Blessed Sacrament."

"Oh, I *am* glad!" said Cattie, laying down her work, and stopping her busy fingers for a few moments. "And shall we have work-day in the school, Sister Xavier, and have our own adoration?"

"Yes, if you are good all the week."

"What is adoration?" whispered Lucy Ward to Alice. "What are you going to do?"

"Oh, ask Sister Xavier; I can't tell you well. It is like going to see our Lord and talk with Him.—Please, Sister Xavier, Lucy wants to know what we shall do at adoration."

"Just what you have told her. You will go and pay a visit to our Lord, who loves us so much, and tell Him that you love Him, and ask Him to give you something out of the rich treasury of His gifts. You will like that, Lucy dear, will you not?"

"I don't know, ma'am," replied Lucy, coldly; and she seemed to dislike being spoken to.

"But I know," cried little Mildred. "I love to go to the chapel then; our Lord looks so white and shining, and every thing is so still—oh! so still and so bright; it is just like heaven."

"What does she mean?" whispered Lucy again, as if half to herself. "Where has she seen our Saviour?"

"In the church," replied Magdalen. "He is always there in the tabernacle."

"Have you seen Him?" said Luey, turning her eyes so full upon Magdalen, that she almost started at their thrilling and suddenly changed expression.

"We cannot see Him in the tabernacle," Magdalen replied; "but on exposition days He is brought out, and that is what Mildred means. But Sister Xavier will tell you all about that."

"Lucy means that it is a new idea to her to hear us speak as if our Lord were really present among us," said Sister Francis Xavier. "Is it not so, Lucy? You feel that though He watches over us and loves us, He is a long way off in heaven—do you not?"

"Yes, I know He is in heaven," replied Lucy. "It says in the Bible that He went up from the Mount of Olives."

"Quite true, my dear; I am glad that you have read the Bible; but do you think that our Lord is in one place only?"

"No, ma'am," replied Lucy, hesitatingly; "He is every where, I believe."

"Yes, He is every where, for He is Almighty

God, God the Son, who, being equal to His Father in all His attributes, is always *omnipresent*, or every where at the same moment. Well, then, do you recollect the account in the Bible of the night before He, as the Man Jesus Christ, died on the cross for us?"

"When He was at supper with the disciples, do you mean?" asked Lucy, whose cold reluctance seemed to melt before her determination to hear the whole subject.

"Yes, my dear, I do. At the last supper, what did our Lord give to His apostles?"

"He gave them bread and wine," replied Lucy, decidedly; at which answer the other children interchanged sorrowful looks of surprise.

"He gave them what *was* bread and wine when He took it into His hands," replied Sister Francis Xavier; "but, as you remember, it became changed into something infinitely more precious. 'This is My Body,' He said; 'this is My Blood;' and there remained no longer the bread and wine, but the precious Body and Blood of Christ, which He then gave for the first time to man."

"How wonderful!" said Magdalen, from her very heart. "Every time I hear it, it seems more strange and beautiful."

"Wonderful indeed is that infinite love," replied the nun. "But now tell me, Lucy, did you never think that it really was His body and blood which was given at the last supper?"

"I don't know, ma'am," replied Lucy; "yes," she added, "I do know, because I have heard them speak of what Roman Catholics say, but—" and she stopped abruptly and decidedly.

"Do not be afraid, my dear," said Sister Xavier, with a kind smile; "say frankly what you wish and what you think. Now, Cattie, you shall tell us how it is that our Lord is still with us, though He is in heaven too. Was the Body of our Lord given only to the apostles?"

"No, sister, that would have been hard," replied Cattie; "He gave the apostles power to consecrate His body and blood too."

"How did He give them that power?"

"By making them priests, sister; and then when they said Mass, they consecrated the bread and wine, as priests do now."

"Quite right. But the apostles are not alive now, are they?"

"No, sister," replied Honor, laughing; "but I am glad that their successors are."

"Whom do you mean by their successors?"

"The bishops and priests, sister. For you know St. Peter and the apostles made other bishops, and they ordained priests; and when they died, other bishops were made, and they ordained other priests, and so on. How nicely that was arranged!"

"Indeed it was," replied Sister Francis Xavier, smiling. "But what were the two great things which this succession of priests received power to do?"

"One was to consecrate our Lord's Body and Blood," said Magdalen. "I know that, but I don't know what else."

"I know," said Cattie; "it was to hear confessions."

"Yes: to absolve sins, and to make or conse-

crate our Lord's Body, are the two great and divine privileges which priests enjoy," answered the nun; "and which are committed to them like heavy burdens of precious things, which they have to guard against robbers, as well as to carry safely. And so, Lucy, you see, that as the apostles received the breath of our Lord on that lonely mountain of Galilee, they received also the great and wonderful power of remitting sins, and of consecrating our Lord's body; and when they ordained other bishops, those bishops received from their hands the same great gifts, which thus passed down from age to age, and from generation to generation of priests; and it is in this manner that the Church possesses our Lord continually, and that He remains upon our altars; and so it is that we can have the wonderful privilege of adoring Him on exposition days."

"But—" said Lucy, and she stopped again.

"But what, my dear? what were you going to object?"

"I was thinking that the Bible never says that the Body of our Saviour was to come and stay out of heaven," replied Lucy, with a face of intense thought.

"The Bible does not indeed say in so many words that we might keep our Lord's Body upon our altars," returned the nun; "but neither does it say that little children might be baptised, nor that we should keep Sunday holy instead of Saturday, and many other things which are far more important. For instance, it is nowhere said in the Bible that the Three Persons of the Blessed Trinity are equal in all divine perfections, yet we cannot be saved

without believing this. It is *the Church* which teaches us this and all other truths; and it is *the Church* which has handed down to us the unspeakable blessedness of living with our Lord, and in His very presence, in the Blessed Sacrament."

Lucy pressed one hand upon her eyes and did not answer; at last she said, looking very earnestly at Sister Francis Xavier, "Where is the Blessed Sacrament?"

"In our chapel, my dear; in the tabernacle, which looks like a model of a little church."

"But if that is really our Saviour, how can He be there and in other churches too at the same time?" said Lucy. "His *body* is not in every place at once; it is only in heaven. Yes, I am sure it is in heaven," she persisted; "He will come from there to judge us all."

"You are quite right in that, my dear," mildly replied the nun to the now excited girl; "He *will* certainly come from heaven to judge us, because He has said so, and caused it to be written in holy Scripture; but He also said, and caused it to be written in holy Scripture, 'Do this in remembrance of Me;' and by the mouth of His apostle, 'As often as you shall eat this bread and drink this chalice, you shall show the death of the Lord until He come;' therefore we are bound to believe that not only once, but as often as our Lord's Body is consecrated, He is with us and in the midst of us, just as He was with His apostles the night before His passion."

While the sister distinctly and earnestly pronounced these words, Lucy's countenance gradually changed from excited opposition to wonder

emotion, and deep thought. At last she said, "I should like to see the Blessed Sacrament."

"It is in the chapel, my dear," replied the sister; "and you shall come with me directly after recreation, and visit It for a little while. In the meantime you can take this little book and look through the devotions in it, and the pictures belonging to it; and afterwards you can ask me what you like about it."

Lucy took the book with an expressive "Thank you, ma'am," that conveyed more than the words themselves; and drawing a little back, she carefully turned over the leaves for a little while, then looking up she said, "Will this book tell me how our Saviour's Body can be in many churches at once?"

"No, my dear," replied Sister Francis Xavier; "that book is for your devotion only: it expresses what we should wish to say to our Lord if we saw Him before us, and shows us how to pour out all the wants of our hearts. No book can tell you what you now find so great a difficulty."

"No book," replied Lucy, looking much disappointed. "Then can you tell me, ma'am, yourself?"

"Not as you understand telling, dear child," replied the nun; "nor could any priest or learned man even do so. We know that it is so, but no one can *explain* a mystery of faith."

Lucy put one hand before her eyes, and presently the large tears were rolling down through her fingers. The children looked at Sister Francis Xavier with inquiring sorrow and wonder, for they did not understand the answer she had given Lucy.

"What is the matter, my dear child?" she said.  
"Speak now truly and frankly to your best friend."

"I thought I had found our Saviour," said Lucy, struggling hard with her tears. "They have always told me to go to Jesus—to seek Jesus—to follow Jesus; and I always wished to love Him, because He died for us on the cross. I have asked every one—our clergyman, and the Wesleyan preacher, and the Independent minister at Seaham—but they always said He was only in heaven and in our hearts; but I never could find Him in my heart. And now, when to-night I thought perhaps I had found Him at last, you say that no one can be certain, no one can tell me either."

"I said that it *was* quite certain, my child," replied the nun, mildly but firmly, and putting her hand on Lucy's beating head. "It is as certain that our Lord's Body is in our tabernacles as that the happiness of heaven will last for ever, because the same voice has said both; but I said (and it is true) that no book and no person can explain to you *how* it is so, because it is a mystery of faith. Can any one explain the mystery of the Blessed Trinity, do you think, or how the Three Persons could exist from all eternity without having any beginning?"

"No, ma'am," said Lucy, "I never could understand that."

"Nor can any one else understand it, my dear; but you believe it, do you not?"

"Yes, ma'am, I do," replied Lucy; "at least, I never thought of doubting it, I believe."

"Exactly so," replied the nun, "because you were taught it, as Protestants happily are, by their

parents and at school. Well, then, it is equally a truth and equally a mystery, that our Lord's Body is present with us when once the bread is consecrated upon the altar by the priest; and if he leaves it in the tabernacle, our Lord's Body is with us still; and if our Lord's Body, or Human Nature, is there, His divinity is there also, because His humanity can never be separated from His divinity. Christ was never, for a single instant, man alone: from all eternity He was God; and at His incarnation He took our nature and became man. It was not that, being man, He took the nature of God, but that, being God, He took the nature of man. His humanity, therefore, cannot subsist by itself; but where His humanity is, there is His divinity; there is He, the Christ, Jesus our God incarnate. Do you understand this?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Lucy, who had drunk in every word with that sudden eagerness peculiar to her character.

"Being then," resumed the nun, gently, but very distinctly, "God incarnate, He has power to make His human nature present wherever He wills, and in such manner as He wills; and by the same power by which, after His resurrection, He came and went like a spirit, though His body could be seen by the apostles and was handled by St. Thomas, by which he passed through closed walls and doors, and suddenly transported Himself from one place to another, so that He vanished at Emmaus from the table,—by this same power, as we believe, He miraculously abides in all our churches at one time, comes and goes again at the masses which are said all over the

world; and in the same one and indivisible but miraculously-distributed flesh, is received whole and entire by hundreds of faithful adorers at one communion, is carried about in other places to the sick and dying, is held up in others to bestow His benediction, and at the same time lies hidden within thousands of tabernacles, on the altars of our churches, in every quarter of the globe. This is our belief; this is the blessed and consoling faith which lifts up and supports our misery in our wretched land of exile; this is the food of our lives, the light of our souls, the consolation of our hearts. This is our *belief*; but no one can explain it, or say *how* this mystery of love can be."

"Ah!" said Lucy, who had rapidly and deeply made her own all that the sister had said, "I love it, I admire it, but I cannot understand it; and I cannot believe what I do not understand."

"Faith is the gift of God," replied Sister Francis Xavier; "He only can teach you, my child; but be sure He will."

More conversation was not to be had, for the great bell rang for the end of the nuns' recreation; and as the sister who had the charge of the dormitory came in, Sister Francis Xavier took Lucy with her and returned to the convent. After going through what seemed to Lucy an endless length of cloister, they stopped before a door covered with a thick quilted leather-hanging. Sister Francis Xavier lifted it gently, and pushing open the noiseless door, led the way into the chapel. It was a new and beautifully-finished building, with the slender pillars and deeply-pointed lancet-windows of the early English date; light and graceful, yet

full of solemnity, conveying to the mind the same kind of chastened gladsomeness as the pictures of our Lady by the Umbrian artists, or in the first manner of Raphael. The polished and many-tinted pavement was unencumbered even with "open seats with poppy-heads;" for the sojourn of many years in Catholic countries had given Father Ashurst in many points a foreign habit and taste, and he had brought in from Belgium the prie-dieu chairs, which are such a welcome luxury in foreign churches. Perhaps the same taste might be seen in the sanctuary, which was paved throughout with the purest white marble, and covered with a broad, rich crimson carpet, from the altar down the centre of the wide steps. There were also no altar-rails nor rood-screen; so that at one view the eye took in the whole beauty of the sanctuary, which was an apse. Over the altar stood a large and very beautiful Spanish crucifix; and a copy of Giotto's Doom, in the triple church of Assisi, was painted on the roof.

Lucy did not profit by all the details we have described, but the solemn, chastened beauty of the whole went deep into her mind and heart, as it was dimly and mysteriously shadowed forth by the moon-like radiance of the silver lamp which hung before the altar. That lamp seemed to invite her to share its watch of untiring love; it seemed to penetrate her heart to the very inmost of its many-hidden and folded depths, and to light them up one by one with a new hope and calm. She fell upon her knees, covered her face with her hands, and remained quite still and motionless. Sister Francis Xavier went through a side door into the nuns'

choir, and there offered up fervent prayers for this wayward but awakening soul.

And as she prayed, faith seemed to dawn still brighter upon Lucy's heart. Like the fresh dew of heaven upon a thirsty land, softly and noiselessly the gift was poured in ; and as her tears fell quick and warm upon the bench, she murmured, "I have found Thee at last, my Saviour and my God!"





## CHAPTER III.

### THE ROYAL GUEST.

**W**HERE are our flowers, Mildred?" said Cattie Allen, on the evening of the Thursday of the same week.

Mildred was busily disentangling a large ball of twine.

"Have you not seen them?" replied the little girl, hastily looking up; "oh, if you could see the big bunches!" and she ran off quickly to the porch of the class-room, and brought back her arms full of flowers. "Look! all these come from Mr. Giffard, and young Mr. Giffard brought these himself. I saw him drive his dog-cart up the hill; and he looked so funny all among the flowers, I could not help laughing, and he nodded at me and laughed too."

"O Mildred, you were not looking out of the windows!"

"No, indeed I wasn't, Cattie; I was out at the porch-door washing the flower-pots. I wouldn't stare out of the windows like a bold girl, now I have been so long in the convent."

"So long!" echoed Honor Shiel, whose round rosy face at this moment appeared at the class-room door; "why, there's no doubt that you saw

the foundations laid, and that's why your hair is grown grey on your head."

Mildred's hand was immediately lifted to her bright clustering curls, and her large brown eyes turned wonderingly upwards to see if Honor's jesting words were true. All the children laughed. Mildred was the plaything and the darling of the school-girls.

"Good news! joyful news!" cried the happy voice of Alice Telford, running in with a huge bunch of roses in her hand. "Come, Cattie! come, Honor! we are to go to help Sister Theresa in the sacristy,—oh, I do so love that! The great candlesticks are out, and the new branches, and such a lovely veil for the tabernacle! I was peeping in with one eye, after I had helped to clean the chapel, and Father Ashurst said, 'Come here with me; I see what you want;' and he went into the nuns' sacristy, and told Sister Theresa there was a poor beggar outside who wanted to speak to her; and when she came out, he did so laugh! and then Sister Theresa told me to fetch all the girls to help dress the sanctuary."

She was still speaking, when all the children began to run here and there, to gather up their flowers, vases, and string; but the lay sister, who was darning stockings at the table, quietly collected her work into her basket, and with a few calm and controlling words stilled the excitement, and soon reducing the scattered elements into order, a quiet progressive movement was effected towards the convent. They found Lucy Ward and Magdalen in the nuns' sacristy. The former was silently arranging a large basket of exquisite hot-

house flowers in tall fairy-like white vases; and as the sacristan glanced at those which were finished, she could not but marvel at the faultless taste which guided the labour, and breathe a fervent prayer for the soul that seemed marked out by God for some special grace.

“ You love flowers, Lucy ?”

“ Do I *not* love them, sister ?” replied Lucy; “ I dream of them at night,—I should like to die looking at them.”

“ Which do you love best ?”

“ I never could quite tell. They speak such different words; but all that they say makes music.”

“ True. Is that why you love them ?”

“ Yes, sister; I get very tired of hearing people talk, but I am never tired of the silent words of my dear flowers. They say so much.”

“ What do they say to you this evening ?”

“ They all seem to whisper something new,” replied Lucy thoughtfully, and as if to herself. “ Look at these white camellias, and side by side with them these blood-red ones. They seem to me to mean so much, but I cannot read it. Can you, sister ?”

“ Yes,” replied the nun, gently. “ The sight of that pure white and blood-red reminds us always of the Sacred Heart of Jesus that was pierced for us. Look, here are the blood and water that flowed out for us. They speak the sweetest music to our hearts.”

“ That is beautiful !” said Lucy, hanging on the words; “ and you understand the flowers too. Every body has always laughed at me if I spoke about it,

except Matthew. Dear Matthew—he never laughs at me ; but he shakes his head, and says I have wild talk, and he can't make it out."

" You love Matthew ?"

" Oh, I love him in my *deep* heart !" said Lucy, her wax-like cheek and brow flushing with a thrill of feeling.

" You have, then, two hearts ; and you love sometimes with one and sometimes with the other ?"

" Yes, sister, I have an outer heart for every body ; but no one is in my inside heart but Matthew and ——" she stopped short.

" And our Lord, now, Lucy ?"

" I can't tell," replied Lucy, returning to her old reserve. " No, I think my inside heart is very empty.—Let us talk about the flowers again. Look at these roses, sister ; their heads are quite bowed down with their weight ; they cannot keep in their sweet smell ; it seems as if it burst out from their great cups." That says something beautiful, but I don't know what."

" I think it does," replied the nun : " it says that they are a faint poor type of that great One who said, ' I am the Rose of Sharon ;' and whose thorn-crowned head was so bowed down with His weight of love on the cross, that the overflowing scent of it converted first the poor thief, and afterwards thousands of miserable sinners. Let it draw you, my child, till you run after those most precious odours, and make them yours for ever."

Lucy was quite silent for a few minutes, and then drawing out a rich cluster of geraniums, she turned her large eyes full on the nun, and said,

"These I love best of all, but I *never* could make out what they said. They all seem to sing together a very rich song that goes through my heart, like a hymn I heard the Spanish sailors sing down on the Parade last summer at night. Can you read these?"

"Perhaps not in a way that you can understand. These may represent the royal and especial gifts which God bestows on the friends He has chosen to Himself. They are set apart and separated from other gifts. They are only to be bought at a great price, nay they are often of priceless value. They cost labour, and pains, and watching; but when the work is done, where can we find its like? Those who possess them will be the brightest jewels in His crown at the last day."

"And who can win these gifts?" said Lucy, breathlessly awaiting the answer.

"Those who *love*," replied the nun, and her words seemed to Lucy the solemn voice of God.

The tears rushed to her eyes, and she murmured to herself, "When shall I know Him? When will He *fill* my inner heart?"

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Morning came. The sun rose cloudless out of the deep-blue sea, giving promise of a day of summer heat. Without the convent all went on as usual. The mackerel-fishers were out in shoals with the first dawn, the troops of mussel and cockle gatherers were filling their creels on the rocks, the farmer was pacing forth on his grey pony, and the shepherds were driving their flocks

to the brown uplands, where the herbage was daily becoming more dry and scanty.

Far away, the chief boatman and his men were cleaning the guns on the tower, and washing out the boat, preparatory to a trip along shore in search of a smuggling lugger that had been lurking about the neighbourhood. The women were leisurely hanging their linen on the lines, which the hot sunny air soon bleached to a snowy whiteness. Without, it was a common week-day; but within, how different to Lucy's observing eyes! The children had all their Sunday uniform and hoods, the young ladies were in white with blue sashes; and the work being speedily concluded and put aside, the chapel was full at an early hour. But was it the same chapel, or some fairy dream that broke upon Lucy's doubting senses, and bewildered her expectant eyes? The rich deep folds of ruby velvet, lined with white satin, that surrounded the tabernacle made it like a royal throne, and around the edge of the upper canopy was enwreathed a row of gems, that seemed to her to flash forth tongues of fire as the light of the candles glanced upon them. A dense forest of tall pure wax arose around the tabernacle, and in every space between, the richest flowers poured forth their fragrant love. The very carpet was changed, and instead of the plain one usually seen, a rich crimson ground covered with bunches of white lilies nearly hid the sanctuary marble; and now the priest entered, with the long file of acolytes in their pure white surplices, bearing the cross and thurible, whose fragrant breath rose slowly to the roof.

The Mass began; a bright thrilling gush of

melody poured from the choir, and Lucy's heart beat with a new and strange emotion. She had been so well and religiously brought up, that the Psalms and sacred Scriptures were quite familiar to her; and this, which is the best heritage of well-disposed Protestants, (alas, if they knew how to use it!) now first awakened into life and meaning. "How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts!"—"My soul longeth and fainteth for Thy courts;"—"I have loved the beauty of the Lord's house, and here will I dwell for ever and ever." As Mass proceeded, a thousand such passages and aspirations burst upon her remembrance; it seemed to her that at last she could really pray; and Mass was over before she had exhausted her new-found treasure of knowledge. Then there was a hush and calm. Every one seemed to be awaiting something, though the last triumphant strains of the *Dona nobis* had died away. Lucy looked up, for she had been kneeling with her face buried in her hands, and she started at the change. The altar was alive with glancing lights. In long rows, in high and waving spires, in star-like groups, they encircled the tabernacle, which was now indeed a Throne of Glory. The priest slowly ascended the steps, and opening the door of the tabernacle fell upon his knees. A soft and solemn melody arose from the choir; it seemed to Lucy the song of adoring angels. *O salutaris Hostia* she heard, and looking on the book which Magdalén had placed before her, she followed the words:

"O saving Victim, opening wide  
The gate of heaven to man below,

Our foes press on from every side ;  
 Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.  
 To Thy great name be endless praise,  
 Immortal Godhead, One in Three ;  
 O grant us endless length of days,  
 In our true native land, with Thee."

The voices ceased, but only for a moment. A new and soul-stirring strain took up the sound, which seemed to Lucy like the trumpet which St. John heard in the New Jerusalem. *Pange lingua gloriosi* began the choir; but she heard no more. One look she had caught of the canopy and of Him that was enthroned therein, and in that sight her whole soul was rapt and absorbed; "the great white throne and He that sat on it, from Whose presence the earth and heavens fled away," was here, and all must keep silence before Him.

Who is it, then, that is here?

"I am He that comes from Edom, with dyed garments from Bosra, whose glorious robe was red with the blood of the grape; it is I that trod the wine-press alone, for of my people there were none with Me; I that am 'mighty to save,' and that redeemed My people in My love and mercy, lifting and carrying them all the days of old, am here—Wilt thou not love Me?"

Who is it that is here?

"I, that was clothed with a garment sprinkled with blood, upon which was written 'Lord of lords and King of kings;' 'I, that went forth fighting and judging with justice, upon whose head were many diadems, but wreathed with

thorns; I, who alone was faithful and true, am here—Wilt thou not love Me?"

Who is it that is here?

"I, that lay in the midst of the throne as a lamb newly slain, the victim of thy salvation, and sprinkled for thee with My own most innocent blood; I, that alone am worthy to receive power, and wisdom, and honour, and glory, and benediction, am here—Wilt thou not love Me?"

Who is it that is here?

"I, that prepare My Church with grace and love, till she shall be like a bride freshly adorned to meet her spouse; I, who have marked her with My fourfold seal within, and with My triple sign without, that all who will may know and bless her, and that all who will not, she shall bear witness against at the last day; I, the spouse of that glorious Church, am here—Wilt thou not love Me?"

Who is it that is here?

"I, the holy, the strong, and the immortal God, the splendour of eternal glory, and the express image of the Father; I, who have so loved thee that I have made Myself a by-word and a mockery, enfolding My beauty in an impenetrable veil, and binding My strength in the bonds of weakness; for thee am I lost, for thee am I breathless and weary, for thee do I stand now knocking, nay for thee am I become a reproach and a castaway, that I may win thee as a prey, and call thee by My name—Ah! wilt thou not love Me?"

Who is it that is here?

"I, that sought thee on the mountains in the early dawn of thy youth, washing thy locks with the dews of My grace, and with the heavy-falling

drops of My long agony-night; I, that beheld thee in thy misery, and brought thee into My fold, feeding thee with the pomegranates and spikenard of My garden, till thy strength was increased, and thou wast able to bring forth fruit for Me—And wilt thou, then, still not love Me ?”

And yet once again,—yea, even the seventh time,—who is it that is here?”

“ Knowest thou Me not yet?—I am that Immanuel who was promised to thee, who gave once My divinity to be veiled in a child, then to be blasphemed on the cross, after that to be thy food and thy delight, and for ever to be joined with My flesh, that through eternal ages I may offer a human body and soul, like thine, as a perpetual sacrifice ; I am that heavenly wheat that was ground and kneaded for thee; I am that vine that was trodden in the wine-press of justice, and of whose crimson drops thou shalt drink at my espousals ; I have called Myself thy Beloved, and wilt thou not give Me thy love ?”

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“ Yes, my Lord and my King ! yes, now do I know Thee, who Thou art, the Holy One of Israel! Thou that shuttest, and no man openeth; Thou that openest, and no man shutteth ; Thou hast opened Thy way into my heart, and no man ever more shall shut Thee out! Flee away then, O my Beloved, like the young hart upon the mountains, and let me fly with Thee from sin and from the world, that I may dwell with Thee for ever in the region of Thy love ! yes, I believe—yes, I hope—I love!”

Lucy was called out of the chapel and led to the refectory, where she ate unconsciously what was placed before her. She was bidden to help Magdalen wash up, and clear away the tables, and sweep the refectory floor; and mechanically she handled the broom, and fetched the water-tins, and performed her task. Mechanically too, when words were addressed to her, she spoke in return; but so out of sense and reason were these replies, that the children smiled, and said to one another that Lucy Ward was growing odder and stranger every day. Magdalen and Cattie, who partly and by dim glimpses read her heart, helped her to get leave to steal back into the chapel at every spare half-hour; and there, with her face buried in her hands, or with her eyes fixed upon the tabernacle, it seemed to Lucy that she spent long ages of a blessed eternity; and as the steady moon-like radiance of the lights around the tabernacle slowly consumed the virgin wax in speechless adoration, there was kindled that day a quenchless and undying love in the deep heart of the young worshipper of the Most Holy.





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE TABERNACLE OUR HOME.



IME wore on, and the summer festivals one by one left each its peculiar remembrances and associations on Lucy Ward's mind; but about which, except to Sister Xavier, she as usual preserved her characteristic reserve and silence; or if she spoke, spoke with a mask as it were, which revealed little of the depths that stirred within.

On the eve of the Feast of SS. Peter and Paul, she surprised every one but the said Sister Xavier, the penetrating and experienced mistress of the school, by asking to see Father Ashurst, that she might be received the next day into the Church. Sister Xavier had regularly instructed Lucy in all the chief points of Christian doctrine, and had paid considerable attention to the thoughtful and pregnant replies which dropped, as it were carelessly and half at random, from her lips; and pursuing the same course of steady reference to Holy Scripture and history, with that strong moral influence of a practical personal experience which the teaching of religious always possesses, Sister Xavier saw that Lucy's prejudices had entirely given way, and were

replaced by the secret inspirations of faith, fed by constant and real prayer. Never since the memorable day of the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament had Lucy ever omitted her visit of adoration in the chapel, which she lengthened or repeated whenever it was allowed. Her request, therefore, was no surprise to Sister Xavier, though it was a great one to Father Ashurst.

He sent for her, however, into his sacristy, where he was writing the notes of his Sunday's sermon and waiting for the evening confessions. "You wished to see me, my child?" he asked, lifting the kind and cheerful face, marked with many a line of thought, from the huge folio of St. Bonaventure that lay beside his writing-case. "Come, sit down, and tell me how I can be of use to you."

Lucy trembled a little; she had still a little awe of that terrible character in all story-books—"the priest."

Father Ashurst's keen glance quickly deciphered the cause of her silence. "Come," he said, "you must not think that I am a stranger. You must tell me exactly what troubles you. Have the nuns been giving you a good scolding?"

The fatherly voice and smile were too much for Lucy's reserve. She smiled too, and said, "No, sir; the sisters are always too kind to me. But I want you to do me a great, a *very* great favour, sir."

"Well, let us hear what it is. I make no rash promises."

"I want to be a Catholic, sir; and to be baptised to-morrow."

"To-morrow? Well, you are a strange child. Do you think you are prepared to be received into the Church?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. I believe all that is in the catechism."

"Do you understand all that is in the catechism?"

"Yes, sir, I think so. Sister Xavier has explained it to me a long time."

"Well, if Sister Xavier is satisfied, I shall be. But first I will question you a little myself."

Father Ashurst examined Lucy shortly upon the creed, the commandments, and the sacraments. The answers were clear and satisfactory, though, as usual, expressed in her own peculiar way. When Father Ashurst again returned to the ninth article of the creed, he said, "Why are you not satisfied to remain in the Protestant Church? Give me some reason of your own."

"It is no Church at all, sir. It was made by the king to satisfy the people, when he made them leave the old Church. It does satisfy people that know no better; but when we know, we never can think it a Church any more."

"What do you feel about it that makes it to be no Church?"

"*I feel nothingness,*" replied Lucy, earnestly. "There is no priesthood to tell us what to do, and there are no sacraments for them to give us. I used to look every where for some one to tell me what to do, but I never found any one. The old rector at Deep Dingle used to give the people flannel and coals and milk. He was very kind to every body that was poor; but we did not want

any help of that kind, so he only told me to be a good little maid and to mind my books, and patted me on the head. When he died, there came a very pale young gentleman from Oxford, and he went to see every one, and said they must come to church every morning. He wore a curious black gown, something like your cassock, sir, but not quite. He came one day when Matthew was out, and I liked him very much."

"What did he say to you?"

"He asked me if I had ever been confirmed, and if I had made my first communion; and he explained communion very well. He said that if I went I should receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. I said I should be afraid, because of my sins; and he looked very sorry, and said that I could tell him my sins, and that he would give me absolution. I asked him if that would be *confession*, as Roman Catholics call it, and he showed me the rubric in the Prayer-book. I had never observed it before, and wondered how it could be there, and that no one should ever do as it told them. He said that these good practices had been forgotten, but that they were being restored. I told him I would think of what he wished me to do, and he went away. When Matthew came home, I said how strange it was that the Protestant Church should have forgotten what was one of the chief things we ought all of us to do. Matthew said it seemed so. I said that in many books we read that the Roman Catholic Church had decayed, but I thought the Protestant Church seemed to have decayed a great deal more. Matthew did not say he thought so; but he was very silent, and

was looking at the Prayer-book all the evening. He called me once to look at the fast-days which we had never thought of; I said again, that if the Protestant Church had forgotten them, Roman Catholics had not, and I was vexed. I was more vexed to think Roman Catholics might be right than I can tell. Soon after that, Matthew got me to come here, and I was vexed at that too. I did not want to leave him, and I did not want to come to the convent."

"Had you any reasons for disliking it besides your love for Matthew and your dislike to our religion?" said Father Ashurst.

"It was not so much dislike of the religion, sir, as it was hatred of being ordered about," replied Lucy, whose natural character was brought strongly out with her new frankness.

"Oh, ho!" said Father Ashurst, good-humouredly smiling; "so you liked your own way at Deep Dingle. I dare say you were more mistress than Matthew was master?"

"Well, sir, I know Matthew spoiled me," replied Lucy, trying not to laugh; "but I was spoiled in another way too."

"Well, out with it."

"Must I tell you that too? I do hate saying what I think. Yes, I will tell you.—When I was at Deep Dingle, Matthew was out all day nearly, and I had no one to talk to, and I did not want any one. I made companions for myself, and of my own, out of the flowers and trees, and people that I used to read of out of an old family Shakespeare of Matthew's, and some fairy-tales, and the Bible. I never wanted any other books than those,

nor any other companions than I used to make out of them—the English kings and nobles, and all those beautiful characters, like Portia and Miranda and Hamlet, that seemed to belong to no country at all. I spent the time after work reading and walking in the dingle with old Duke, Matthew's mastiff; and if any body came, I got so tired of them! I was tired of every one except Matthew."

"And did Matthew enter into these heroes and heroines of yours?"

"He did, sir, a great deal. He used to laugh at me when I spoke about them as if I knew them quite well; but he would read to me by the hour about them, and then he got to love them too."

"And did Matthew never bring any one else home with him?"

"No, sir; but sometimes Hugh Chester, who worked with him, used to come in in the evening."

"And did you like Hugh Chester as well as Matthew!"

"No, sir," said Lucy, smiling half disdainfully at so simple a question. "I liked Hugh very well when he read; but when he talked, I got tired of him sooner than any one else. No, I can't say that—I was more tired of myself a great deal. Oh, I was so tired of being alive—" Lucy stopped short, and her eyes filled with tears, which she seemed resolved to drive back.

"My child," said Father Ashurst kindly, "I do not wonder that you were tired; and although it was a suffering, it was the best thing Almighty

God could do for you, to weary you of a life which, though it was innocent through His grace, was very useless, and dangerous to one of your character. You cannot but love, and you hate submission, and the frank exposure of your heart and mind; and concealed passions are far more dangerous than violent ones."

"Do you know that?" exclaimed Lucy, looking up. "Do you quite understand me? Who could have told you?"

"The One who sent me to do His work does not leave His poorest servant without the means of carrying it out," replied the Father. "In these things, my child, we do not trust to human help, but to the light of God."

"I see it," replied Lucy, perfectly convinced; "and that gives me greater faith even than I had. Father," she continued, "I am sure that I must be a Catholic, for I *am* one. On the day of the first exposition of the Blessed Sacrament after I came to the convent, I heard Jesus Christ speaking to me, and I saw Him in my heart, or in my soul, I don't know which—somewhere inside of me it certainly was; and He cleared up all the darkness that made me so tired, and then I felt happy and rested. Then I saw that He never could speak to me in any Church but the Catholic Church, because He is in no other; and if He is not there, it cannot be a Church, because He said He would always be with us to the end of the world. Then I understood why I never could find Him before, and why every place was cold and unsatisfying. And if Jesus is in the Catholic Church and staying in it, it must

be the only place for us to be in, because He is every thing that we want: for now I know what the Blessed Sacrament is, it seems to me exactly like walking about with Jesus and following Him, as the apostles did; or like living with Him, as Mary and Joseph did at Nazareth; or like being with Him for ever in heaven. This is what I was thinking all that day; and ever since He seemed to say to me a hundred times a day, ‘Follow Me, for I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life;’ and this must mean that I am to be a Catholic. This is my great reason, father. I have not thought much about any others, because I thought that if I found Jesus, He would teach me every thing else. May I make my confession, and be taken into the Church?”

“Yes, my child,” replied Father Ashurst, who had been deeply moved while she was speaking; “yes, you may make your confession this evening at seven o’clock; and when you prepare for that holy sacrament, bless God with all your heart for bringing you safely out of your former life into His holy Church. Now go, my child, and tell Sister Xavier I wish to speak to her before the confessions begin.”

Lucy curtsied and left the sacristy; and Father Ashurst leant his elbow on the table and covered his eyes with his hand. One or two large tears slowly rolled down his hardy face. He did not heed them: for while one “deep” of his solidly-founded humility “called to another,” he earnestly prostrated his soul before God, saying, “Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

Was Father Ashurst really a *sinner*?—Ah! I thought there were a great many bad priests!

Father Ashurst had been sent to college at eight years old, and he never left it afterwards, till he entered the noviceship of the religious body to which the college belonged. He went from the novitiate to Belgium, and from Belgium to Rome. During the whole of that time he was more than usually distinguished for the straightforward humility with which he performed his duties, and the unwearied mortification of his daily life—not *extraordinary and particular exterior mortifications*, but *habitual and continual interior mortification*. He was full of piety, but it was more solid than shining; and his charity delighted more in a succession of continual little hidden acts, than in any remarkable and ostentatious exercise of it. One thing, indeed, was conspicuous in him, according to the apostolic injunction, “Let your modesty be known to all men;” and religious modesty was *shining* in every look, word, and gesture, with a mixture of manly simplicity and angelical purity most striking to the observer. Otherwise, he mingled with all, and held intercourse with all, frankly, simply, though prudently, with a kindly grace and a calm decision that swayed all hearts; and wherever his soldier-like step was heard, or the keen glance of his eagle eye and friendly smile were seen, old and young, rich and poor, Protestant and Catholic, gave him a courteous greeting as they passed, or gathered about him like children to tell their griefs and joys, their hopes and fears, their good and evil, whatever it might be.

And was this man a *sinner*?

Yes, and in his own eyes "the very chief."

But then, you know, he belonged to that Church which is distinguished by the *eminent holiness* of so many thousands of her children.

Next day, accordingly, Lucy Ward, with Matthew's full consent, was reconciled to the Church, and conditionally baptised.





## CHAPTER V.

### THE WORD MADE FLESH.

**S**OME while before the Feast of the Assumption, when Lucy was preparing for her first communion, she became very weak, and suffered continually from headache and a pain in her side, of which she complained very little to any one. Her delicate frame seemed to become more and more spirit-like, as the summer grew into autumn; her hands became thin and transparent; and her large eyes gleamed with so glorious a light, that the children alternately wondered and admired as they talked with her, or watched her earnest and impassionate gaze at the Blessed Sacrament in the chapel. Cattie and Magdalen, who were "children of Mary," looked forward eagerly to the time when Lucy should be proposed to the confraternity, and prophesied with girlish glee that she would be a *real saint*, another St. Stanislaus to lead them on to virtue and piety; and Alice, whose gay heart was full of the most ardent devotion, watched, and waylaid, and questioned, and cross-questioned Lucy about her prayers, and about her thoughts on holy subjects, feeling a strong con-

viction, as she privately told Sister Xavier, that Lucy had real visions, and that she certainly saw something on exposition-days and in the Blessed Sacrament that they could not.

"She cannot see more than is there," Sister Xavier one day said, in answer to Alice's reiterated suppositions and imaginations; "and if you have faith, you can see exactly the same. Is not our Lord always there?"

"Yes, sister; but think of *seeing* Him with our own eyes!" urged Alice.

"Well, my child, and do you not see Him with the eyes of your soul?"

"Oh, yes, sister. But I should like to see what Lucy sees with my bodily eyes."

"Do you do as Lucy does," replied S. Xavier, "and then you will be laying up something real for the future. At the last day our Lord will not ask you if you have *seen*, but if you have *done* what He bade you. Did He not give, on the contrary, a special blessing to those who do *not* see, and yet believe? Do you imitate Lucy's perseverance and love of prayer, and put her visions out of your head."

Alice acquiesced and went on with her work again; but the children still believed that there was something extraordinary about Lucy; and though the sisters were careful to put down foolish conjectures, and whatever was dangerous to the humility of the young convert, they were not behindhand in seeing the true state of Lucy's mind.

Lucy, meanwhile, wholly unconscious of their suggestions or conceptions, unconscious altogether

of herself, was daily preparing for the Feast of the Assumption, by prayer, by reading, and by talking with her beloved Sister Xavier, who, busy as she was, always seemed to have full time to listen to the outpourings of her heart or her mind, and always to be able to understand, to strengthen, or to correct them. One evening early in August, they were sitting together in the terraced garden under the shade of a broad-leaved plane-tree, which just shook its cool green boughs in the light sea-breeze. Rich beds of geraniums, fuchsias, and mignonette lay before them, raised by the hands of those consecrated to God, for the adornment of the altar; and as the faint sweet odours were heavily borne on the wind, Lucy could not but think of the prayers of the saints, that went up like incense before the throne of God. "Sister," she said, "may I have my instruction here to-day?"

"Yes, my child; and you know I told you that as the time was so near, you should to-day give an account yourself of all that I have told you."

"I will, if I can; but I shall not be able to do it well, or shortly," replied Lucy.

"First tell me what you are going to do on Thursday week."

"I am going to receive our Lord, sister. I am going to receive His body, His blood, His soul, and His divinity, under the appearance of bread and wine."

"Well," said Sister Xavier, perceiving that she seemed lost in thought.

"His body, which was born of Mary; His blood, which cannot be separated from it; His soul, which

is human too,—all belong to the Man Jesus,” replied Lucy, slowly; “so that I shall receive all the humanity of our Lord; and as His divinity can never be divided from Jesus, for He is God, so I must receive God the Son too. How wonderful! I should never be tired of thinking of that.”

“ Most true, my child; but you say ‘under the appearance of bread and wine.’ Explain how the bread is changed.”

“ When the priest comes in to say Mass,” continued Lucy, “ he brings in his hand the gold cup or chalice, and a little gold plate on the top of it, called the paten. They are both covered over with a piece of silk, called the chalice-veil. Then he takes a large, round, flat cake of flour and water—wheat-flour, sister—out of a box, and puts it upon the little plate, or paten. It is nothing but flour and water then, and I might take it and break it in pieces if I liked, or eat it. Afterwards he puts some wine, made of grapes, into the chalice, and a few drops of water. He does not put much water, or it would not be wine any longer; and for the same reason, he is careful that the wine is pure, and not adulterated. Then in the Mass, when the great words of consecration are said, which our Lord spoke at the Last Supper, that flour-and-water cake becomes the body and blood of our Lord, and the wine and water in the chalice becomes the blood and body of our Lord: because where His body is, His blood must be; and where His blood is, His body must be too. The body and blood and soul of Jesus, and the divinity of God the Son, are in the paten and chalice both. Is that right, sister?”

"Quite right. But what becomes of the bread and wine?"

"The bread and wine are not there, sister. They are changed into the body and blood of our Lord. Only the '*appearance*' is there, as the catechism says. It looks like bread, and it tastes like wine, but it is neither one nor the other."

"Do you *believe* this, Lucy?" said Sister Xavier, laying down her knitting, and looking seriously at Lucy.

"Believe it, sister! Yes, indeed I do. How very odd to ask that!"

"Why so? You have to *disbelieve* your senses."

"But so I have to do *very often*," said Lucy; "but I cannot disbelieve our Lord. He said, 'This is My body,' and 'This is My blood'; and He must have meant what He said. I do not think this is so hard to believe as—" and she stopped.

"As what, my child?" said the sister, who saw intense thought in Lucy's face.

"I do not think it is *any thing like* so hard to understand or to believe, as that our Lord became a little child," replied Lucy, with great earnestness. "Of course it is a very, *very* great miracle, though I think the love in it makes it much more wonderful than the power of it. But, sister, if any one can believe that Almighty God, Who made all the heavens, and the sun and the moon and the stars, and the beautiful green earth, and all its woods and mountains, and the great glorious sea, always going on ebbing and flowing,—that *He* could cramp Himself up into a little child's body, and cry and laugh, and eat and sleep, and do

exactly as our Lady and St. Joseph told Him,—if any one can believe this, and go deep into it, I do not think it is at all hard to believe that the same God could turn bread into His flesh, or wine into His blood; I really do not."

Sister Xavier was silent. What could she be thinking of?

"I do so think, sister—oh, I do *so* often think of that," continued Lucy. "I remember in one of the fairy tales I used to read, there was a story about a great genie who was shut up in a copper vessel, sealed with Solomon's seal. I liked that story so much, because it seemed to me very beautiful that such a powerful spirit could be imprisoned in a little vessel by only a seal. And when I got to think about our Lord's greatness, shut up for thirty-three years in the prison of His body, and kept there, as it were, by the seal of His love, it seemed to me more wonderful than all the fairy tales and poems in the world."

"And was it not this very wonderfulness of His love which caused the apostle to cry out, *O altitudo!*" said Sister Xavier; "O the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! And then what do you say to the long prison of the tabernacle?"

"Oh, sister, that is so wonderfully beautiful!" replied Lucy, ardently. "That was what made me first see that I must be a Catholic; for it is what nobody but Almighty God could ever have thought of. But still, the Blessed Sacrament, and the Mass, and communion, all grow out of our Lord's becoming a little child, and I think that is the most wonderful of all."

Sister Xavier was again silent; she was thinking, perhaps, that what the wise and prudent cannot discover, is revealed to babes, who receive it gladly, and pass onward into the kingdom of heaven.

As she did not for a while speak, Lucy went on:

"If people are going to communion, the priest receives his portion first, and afterwards gives them theirs. This reminds me of what I used to read in the Old Testament, when the priests' servants used to come and take some flesh out of the pot with an iron hook, and give the rest to the people."

"True," said Sister Xavier smiling; "but the poor people under the old law were very badly off, compared with us. You know the priests took the best portion sometimes, and left them the worst."

"Oh, that is true, indeed!" exclaimed Lucy: "but now both priest and people receive the same—the very best portion they ever could receive, which is our Lord Himself. Sister, is that because the old law was a law of justice, and the new law a law of mercy?"

"Yes," replied the sister; "now Almighty God treats the Church not as she deserves, but with the everlasting love of the Eternal Spouse."

Lucy paused a moment, and then went on:

"When the people are going to communion, they go up to the rails and take hold of the communion-cloth, to prevent the least crumb from dropping on the floor. The priest then opens the tabernacle, and takes out another silver cup, called the *ciborium* or food-holder, because it holds the best food we can ever taste. This cup has a cover to it, which he takes off; and inside there are a great many little, round flour-and-water cakes, which

have been consecrated before, and therefore are now the true body and blood of our Lord. He gives one to each person; and when they have received Jesus, they get up and join their hands, and go back to their places to talk to Him. Oh, how glad they ought to be! how glad they *must* be! They can tell Him *all* the things they have kept up in their hearts so long."

Sister Xavier went on with her knitting still; but deep and fervent prayers were poured from her calm soul for the dear child, who sat for a while lost in the fervent thoughts which crowded upon her. It was such a comfort, as Alice always said, that talking to Sister Xavier was "like talking to nobody."

"But our Lord does not stay very long," continued Lucy at length; "there is not time to say very much. He goes away after a quarter of an hour, or, at the outside, half an hour. I should like to catch hold of His garment, and say, 'Stay with us, Lord, for now it is evening,' as the disciples did at Emmaus."

"It is expedient for you that I go," replied Sister Xavier, in a low voice. "'I go to prepare a place for you;' and if it were not prepared, how could we go to Him?"

"Oh, I hope it is prepared!" exclaimed Lucy, ardently. "I *hope* it is; for even when that day comes, and I receive Him, I know it will not be enough. How could it be enough? When He is gone again, it is so long to wait. We ought to go to communion every half-hour!"

"That will be in heaven, my child," replied the sister, gazing with anxiety at the expressive

countenance of the girl, which beamed with an unnatural brilliancy; "here we must labour, and afterwards enter into our rest."

"Sister," said Lucy, as if unconsciously, her deep eyes fixed earnestly on the cloudless August sky; "sister, if we love *very* much, perhaps our Lord will not make us stay a great while to labour, for *I think love is harder than labour.*"

"*If we love as much as you say, it is,*" replied Sister Xavier. "When the Holy Spirit said, 'Love is as strong as death,' He meant many things by it. 'Love presses and constrains us,' as the apostle said; and do you not think that of all the trials of that glorious witness, that was the greatest which forced him to pronounce his strong and emphatic sentence, '*I desire to depart and to be with Christ?*'"

"Oh, yes I!" exclaimed Lucy, "I am sure it was: but yet he seems too strong quite to feel the labour as I mean: he knew it, but he could bear it. But St. Stanislaus, sister, really could not bear it, and I am so glad he could not; he *forced* our Lord to take him to heaven."

"Yes, he took the kingdom of heaven by violence," replied the sister; "but you must remember that he laboured well too while he lived. But now you have gone into heaven with St. Paul and St. Stanislaus, and such good company has made you forget to say what we ought to do after communion."

"When we go back to our places," continued Lucy, "we can kneel down and kiss our Lord's feet and hands, and thank Him for coming to see us; we can ask Him to let us drink out of His wounds, and we can then draw strength with joy

‘out of the fountains of our Saviour.’ I never knew what that really meant till now. The greatest joy and strength comes from drinking out of the Sacred Heart. Sometimes we can sit down at His feet, like Magdalene; sometimes we can talk with Him, like the apostles at supper; and sometimes we can kiss his feet only, and speak as the poor blind beggar did when He was going by, and he cried out very loud. But, sister, I do not think these are quite the nicest ways of spending the time.”

“ Which do you think would be the nicest ?”

“ The very nicest would be, to sit down close by our Lord, and lean against Him, and not speak a single word,” replied Lucy. “ There would be no need of talking, because our hearts would be open quite wide, and He could see all that was inside of them.”

“ But do you not like speaking to our Lord ?”

“ Yes, better than to any body, because He knows,” replied Lucy; “ but I don’t like talking at all—it *interrupts loving*. I like to be quite quiet in the chapel; and then our Lord slides nice things into one’s heart, and He takes hold of one’s soul, and then it is quite safe, because it seems somehow inside of Him.”

“ I thank Thee, Father,” again the sister inwardly said, “ because Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes.”



## CHAPTER VI.

### THE FOOD OF ANGELS.

**T**HE long-expected Thursday came at last, the lovely festival of the Assumption, which fills all Catholic hearts with a joy peculiarly its own, as being the birthday of their Mother's glorious life in heaven. Thursday came, and bright and cloudless rose the August sun over the hills and grassy valleys of St. Mary's, and cast his long light across the heaving sea, which leaped up in cresting waves to meet his beams. Brightly, too, he streamed into the chapel upon the rich tiers of musky blossoms which surrounded our Lady's altar, and which threw a changeful fragrance from the Sanctuary, as if hidden seraphs were there breathing out heavenly love.

"Oh, make haste, make haste!" cried the joyous voice of Alice Telford, running into the school; "the first bell has rung, and here is Lucy's veil not on yet. Where is she?"

"In the class-room with Sister Magdalen; she is doing her hair so smooth," exclaimed Mildred.

"Doesn't she look nice?"

"She looks like an angel," replied Cattie; "but I think she is one nearly."

"Perhaps she will be one soon," said Honor; "to-day is the day, you know."

"Honor, you know Sister Xavier said we were not to speak of that before the others," said Magdalen, in a low voice.

"Ah, now I've forgotten again!" said Honor. "Well, no one has heard it, luckily; our Lady would not let a poor 'child of Mary' get into a scrape on the Assumption."

"Is Lucy going to be a 'child of Mary' to-day?" said little Mildred; "she has so prayed for it. I know she has, and I know something else too."

"What does little Wisdom know?" said Honor, looking at Magdalen.

"I know," replied Mildred, tossing her sunnycurls, "this is the day St. Stanislaus died and went to keep his mother's feast in heaven."

"Well, here's news!" cried the mischievous Honor; "here's a new edition of the Lives of the Saints, just pocket size."

"Now, Honor, you are only making believe to laugh," said Mildred, very gravely; "for you know I heard Lucy praying as well as you; and I heard her talk in her sleep, too, in the dormitory, and she said, 'Let me die, dear Jesus, and come to Thee after my first communion.'"

"Hush! here she is! what a chatterbox you are, Mildred! you were dreaming that time, I think," said Cattie.

Lucy at that moment came in with Sister Magdalen, who took the long veil from Alice's hands, and placed it on her head, and the wreath over it.

It was no wonder that the children said Lucy looked like an angel. Any one besides children might have thought so too. The simple flowing frock of spotless white, the long transparent veil, and the light green wreath, gave a more spirit-like outline to her transparent and fragile frame; while the rich silky braids of hazel-brown hair seemed to shed a kind of light around that alabaster brow, upon which, and in her glorious eyes, most clearly lay the seal of the cleansing grace of the sacrament of penance, from which she had freshly come.

Alice ran hither and thither, overflowing with delight, now for Lucy's manual, now for a pocket-handkerchief, and now for pins; so that what with bringing forth things that were wanted, and what with dragging out things that were not, she gave every one something to say and something to think about, which was purposely done to prevent Lucy from being spoken to, or disturbed in the silent joy which the affectionate girl saw was too deep for words.

Too deep for words to any human being; but when Lucy was in the chapel, how did her heart gush forth in fervent joyous prayers! It seemed to her that she had never heard Mass before, never felt or understood half its wondrous beauty as she did now. During the offertory she prayed fervently for every one whom she loved, because when the canon of the Mass began she would have to prepare for her communion.

*“Sanctus, sanctus, sanctus Dominus Deus Sabaoth. Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts!”*

“Oh, how holy is He who is coming into my

heart! so little a heart, and so great a God—even the Lord of hosts; that means, of battles and armies. Yes, O my Jesus, Thou art a great conqueror, and yet peace itself. Let me then be strong in Thee, and so make Thee a house of peace for myself to rest in."

"*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini.* Blessed is he who cometh in the name of the Lord!"

"If he who cometh *in the name* of the Lord is 'blessed,' how much more blessed is the Lord Himself! He is coming filled with blessings for me—for *me*. Who am I, that He should ever have looked at me? How could He see me, or find me out, while I never thought of Him? O Jesus, forget all my sins, forget that I forgot Thee, remember only Thine own loving Heart!"

Then, as the low, solemn bell rang, she lowered her head upon the bench, and prostrating her heart before God, begged for love, for deeper and higher and wider love, and that she might be soon with Him, possessing Him on earth, and very, *very* soon be with Him for ever in heaven.

"*Agnus Dei, qui tollis peccata mundi, miserere nobis.* *Dona nobis pacem.* Lamb of God, who takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us! Give us peace."

"O Lord, give us peace! In the world there are many trials and much bitterness of heart; we love and we learn to unlove, for no one is worthy of our love; we are tossed to and fro, and tempted on every side. The 'enemy cometh in like a flood,' and destroys the image of God in our hearts, and we stretch forth our hands and cry, '*Exultes*

*filiæ Hœvæ, we are weary of our bondage.' O Lord, give us peace with Thee!"*

"Peace, be still!" seemed breathed into Lucy's heart. It was the voice, now so well known, of the 'Beloved,' who was wont to knock so softly, and never to knock in vain. "Peace! I am here, and soon shall be entirely thine. I have heard thy frequent prayer, and the hour is very near. Watch, and be ready when I shall call for thee."

"*Domine, non sum dignus ut intres sub tectum meum.* Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof."

"No, not worthy," was the answer in Lucy's heart; "but *Thou art worthy, my God, and in Thee alone do I trust. Oh, love me now, and come to me, my sweetest Jesus!*"

The children knelt breathless, as they saw her go up to the altar-rails: she seemed to float upon the air,—so light, so eager, and yet so chastened were her steps, as, like a spirit, she flitted by them and knelt down.

"*Corpus Domini nostri Jesu Christi custodiat animam tuam ad vitam eternam, amen!* The body of our Lord Jesus Christ preserve thy soul to everlasting life!"

"Thou art come, my God! Oh, I thought Thee sweet before, but now I find Thee *sweetness!* Hold me up yet a little, for I cannot live and see Thy face, Thy loving, glorious face. Oh, let me live to thank Thee, or die in thanking Thee, and so be with Thee for ever! But now I cannot thank Thee nor speak to Thee, for I feel a great peace, all

beautiful and deep; too deep, too deep for words. Hush! now I will keep silence and adore Thee, and love."

When the chapel was empty, and all the nuns had long made their thanksgiving, Sister Xavier went in for Lucy, and found her still with her hands gently clasped, and her head bent down upon them. She touched her, but she did not move; she spoke to her, but there came no answer. Sister Xavier then bent down to the child, and quietly whispered, "Lucy, our Lord calls you now to obey;" and immediately awakening, like one from a trance, Lucy arose from her knees, and after making her genuflexion, followed the sister to the nuns' parlour, where breakfast was arranged with flowers for all the "children of Mary."

"*Sanguis Christi, inebria me,*" softly passed Sister Xavier's lips, as she led the way for the young communicant to the scene of affectionate congratulation and innocent joy.





## CHAPTER VII.

### THE HEARTH-CAKE ON THE JOURNEY.



ow is Lucy?" asked Mildred of Cattie, as she softly entered the children's classroom on the morning of the eve of the Octave of the Assumption; "have you seen her, Cattie?"

"Oh, yes, I have been with Magdalen to talk to her and to say our office," replied Cattie; "Magdalen thinks she will die very soon, but I cannot believe it. Oh, she does look so bright and beautiful—just like an angel!"

"That's why I think she's going to die," replied Magdalen, who now followed Cattie into the room with her office-book in her hand. "Lucy looks much too beautiful to live; I mean not commonly beautiful, but she has such a *wonderful* look. Her eyes seem as if they had seen our Blessed Lady already; and she smiles every now and then to herself, as if the angels were talking to her."

"So they do, and our Lord too, I am sure,"

added Cattie ; “ for she said when nobody was speaking, ‘ Yes, that is quite true—yes, dear Lord ;’ just as if our Lord were sitting by the couch. Oh, I hope we may go again soon and see her ! ”

“ Sister Xavier said we might sit up part of to-night,” replied Magdalen ; “ we four are to take it in turns, and I am so glad we may. But now we must go into school, for the bell is just going to ring.”

The said bell accordingly did ring, before Cattie had finished washing her hands ; and the half-sad, half-rejoicing group in the class-room was dispersed by its well-known sound.

We shall take the opportunity of walking up to the convent and into the cool infirmary-dormitory, where Lucy lay upon a large couch, with dear Sister Xavier by her side.

The dormitory was long and high, and refreshingly shaded by outside awnings from the scorching sun, so that the breezes blew in cool and fragrant over the garden and from the sea beyond. The turf-y downs outside the walls looked now green and bright, and now shadowy, as the clouds flew over them ; and beyond, the castle-crowned hill and distant picturesque old town, the chalk cliffs washed by the waves, the far-off fleet of fishing-boats, and the wide everlasting sea,—could all be seen by Lucy, as in some lovely Italian landscape exquisitely painted. But though at times her eyes were fixed upon the blue sky or bluer sea, her thoughts were not of them. Beautiful as was the world without,—the glorious “ earth-rind” of the external works of God,—there were far lovelier visions floating before the eyes

of the pure and loving soul that was bidding earthly beauty farewell for her eternal home.

For now, indeed, Lucy was dying. The longing desire of heaven and the face of her Incarnate God had so fretted the frail body, which already inherited the most rapid form of decline, that thread after thread of the delicate frame had snapped, or, as it were, had been consumed by the ardent fire within. A careless observer might have been even now deceived; but to a practised eye, the alabaster temples, the starting azure veins, the bright cheek and lips, and the deep glittering brightness of the eye, told that in a few hours the thirsting soul would be at rest.

"Sister," whispered Lucy, "will Father Ashurst come soon?"

"Very soon, dear child; it is not three o'clock yet. Do you feel more ill?"

"I feel well," replied Lucy, speaking with difficulty, "quite well; but oh, I see such lovely things, and I want to get there very much."

The sister listened with breathless attention, while Lucy, as if from a heavy dream or half ecstasy, in broken sentences continued—

"No words can tell what they are like . . . . white shapes, all snow-white, with gold dew-drops on their wings . . . . and they bow down softly all together, like white lilies when the wind blows over them. They are going up and up, such a glorious place . . . . and they take me with them . . . . but where I cannot see . . . . There is One there who sits like a king, but I cannot see His face; He says it is not time." . . . .

Two sisters at the moment came softly into the

dormitory, one of whom whispered something to Sister Xavier; the other was Mother Regis, the novice-mistress, whom Lucy had always greatly loved. But now she did not perceive her; and as they quietly sat down behind the couch, she again spoke:

"And now, I think, it would be time, if Father Ashurst were to come and bring me my last food. I think if He were here, I could beg Him so much that He could not leave me behind. Dear Sister Xavier, will you ask Father Ashurst to come now?"

"He is coming, my child," replied the sister, softly rising, and bending over her; "but, Lucy, you promised to be very good and patient."

"Yes, sister, I was wrong. Indeed I will be good. I will wait; but every moment seems a year. I cannot think how *you* can be always so patient when you see those shapes, and see His face so often, and hear His voice. Now I see them going up again. Oh, how many, *many* thousands, with their hands together, and their long, *long* wings, and their snow-white robes! And there are more, more, with bare heads, and crimson crosses on their breasts, and bright armour, and cloaks all washed in the blood of One. Oh, let me go with them! Show me Thy face, and let me live!"

Sister Xavier rose and glided away; but she soon returned with a religious, at the sight of whom the sisters rose, and removed further from Lucy's couch. It was the Mother Superior, who quietly took her place beside Lucy's pillow, and

wiped the death-drops that now stood thickly on her transparent brow.

"Reverend mother," said the child, catching hold of her hand and kissing it with joyful respect, "where am I?" Then immediately she relapsed into her former dreamy state.

"There is one sitting by His side. She is coming soon for me, for her hands are spread out towards me. O Mary! O Mother! Mary, lead me to Jesus! . . . . Come quickly, dear Jesus; I am very tired of waiting. Oh, let me see Thee! Thou art sweeter than honey and the honeycomb. Thou art calling me to be crowned on the mountains. How long have I cried to Thee to come! . . . . Thou art not sweet, but *Sweetness!* O my God! not beautiful, but *Beauty*. When will the morning come that I may be with Thee for ever? When, when?" Lucy sank back, gasping, on the pillow; her breath coming thick and thicker from her labouring breast, while the drops stood on her forehead like rain. Her eyes opened, and their depths seemed deeper than ever. "Food! food!" she gasped,—"the end is coming."

At that moment the faint sound of a distant bell was heard coming along the corridors. It was borne so faintly at first, that the sisters did not observe it; but the first sound was enough for the ear of the listener. To her it was the "cry of the voice" of the Beloved. She sprang up from the pillows, clasped her hands together, and gazed at the door of the dormitory with her whole soul in her eyes. Sister Xavier immediately perceiving that the Blessed Sacrament was approaching, went

out with Mother Regis to meet It. The little altar had been freshly prepared by the infirmarian with large bouquets of flowers, and was now lifted by the other sister to the foot of Lucy's couch, at a little distance from it. The Mother Superior quietly smoothed the long braids of Lucy's hair, laid her white communion-veil across it, and folded a snow-white dressing-gown neatly round her with a broad loose band. Nearer and nearer came the bell. The acolytes entered, two and two, with lighted candles; then all the sisters; and lastly came Father Ashurst, in surplice, veil, and stole, bearing the Blessed Sacrament in the ciborium, from the chapel. The "children of Mary" stole in behind.

Every one was on their knees, and the deepest silence reigned through the dormitory. A few tears fell from the sisters' eyes at the touching look and voice of the traveller, whose short, gasping breathing and fervent aspirations alone broke the solemn stillness of the evening hour.

"O my great and loving God, now art thou come to me, now hast Thou found Thy poor child! . . . Oh, I will not let Thee go until Thou blessest me, . . . and hearest my one prayer! . . . Come, Jesus; come quickly! Oh, hear the voice of my poor, feeble love!"

"*Confiteor Deo omnipotenti*" began the clear, childish notes of the acolytes. "I confess to Almighty God, to blessed Mary ever Virgin, to blessed Michael the Archangel, to blessed John the Baptist, to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, to all the saints, and to thee, father, that I have sinned exceedingly, through my fault, through my

fault, through my most grievous fault. Therefore, I beseech blessed Mary ever Virgin, blessed Michael the Archangel, blessed John the Baptist, the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, all the saints, and thee, father, to pray to the Lord our God for me. Amen."

"*Misereatur tui omnipotens Deus.* May the Almighty God have mercy upon thee, and forgive thee thy sins, and bring thee to life everlasting. Amen," responded the calm and solemn voice of the priest. Then turning round, he held the Sacred Host in his hand, repeating low and with deep feeling the *Domine non sum dignus*.

Lucy's glorious eyes were upraised to the Sacred Host, and fixed with such adoring love as filled the witnesses with an awful joy. "Jesus," she said, and the clear tones of her young voice sounded through the breathless stillness like the voice of an angel,—"Jesus, my food, my strength, my life, come to my thirsty soul. Now I see Thy face. It is enough; I come into Thy precious, precious wounds!"

She received the bread of life, the strength and help for her last journey, and immediately sank back on the pillows. Her hands were clasped; her deep eyes fixed; a bright, heavenly smile flitted across her face. "Jesus, O Jesus! now I see Thee! Jesus, Mary, come!"

The long, level rays of the evening sun streamed upon the couch, gilding the angelic face and shining waves of hair, the smile yet lingering, the lips yet apart, the hands still gently clasped upon her breast.

The pilgrim was gone on her way refreshed ;  
the wanderer was at home.

*Surge amica mea, columba mea, formosa mea,  
et veni.*

“ Arise, my love, my dove, my beautiful one  
and come ; for winter is now past, the rain is over  
and gone ; the flowers have appeared in our land ;  
the time of pruning is come ; the voice of the  
turtle is heard in our land ; the fig-tree hath put  
forth her green figs ; the vines in flower yield their  
sweet smell. Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and  
come.”

Truly, “ a loud cry in the ears of God is the  
ardent love of the soul which saith : ‘ O my God,  
my love, Thou art all mine, and I am all Thine ! ’ ”







THE LEGEND OF  
BLESSED IMELDA,  
OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC,

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Blessed Imelda Lambertini was clothed in the Dominican habit at Bologna, whilst still a child. On account of her extreme youth, the confessor of the convent refused her earnest and repeated entreaties to be admitted to holy Communion. At length, one day, whilst the other sisters were communicating, a brilliant Host, surrounded with rays of glory, left the altar, and stood over Imelda's head. The priest, wonderstruck at the sight, came to the spot; and not daring longer to resist the manifest will of God, communicated the happy child, who, crossing her arms on her breast, expired the moment after in an ecstasy of joy. An inscription over her grave in the church gives a detailed account of this occurrence, which took place in the year 1333.

IT is a dim old church, whose aisles,  
From many a column's clustered piles,  
With carved and fretted roof o'erhead,  
In lofty arch and transept spread.

Soft fall the rays in chequered glow  
Upon the marble floor below,  
With a new radiance warm and bright,  
And pools of gold and azure light,  
From the rich casements caught and given,  
Where glorious shine the saints of heaven.

The incense-cloud is stealing  
The lofty aisles among,  
And the choir is softly pealing  
With the swell of sacred song,  
With the thrice-said "Agnus Dei,"  
For mercy and for peace;  
And now the echoes die away,  
As the sounds of chanting cease.  
Then comes the tone of a single voice,  
The priest's on the altar-stair,  
And the Lord of life and glory  
He is holding for worship there:  
For it is the sweet communion hour  
Of holy Easter morn,  
And the faithful to the altar pour  
To receive the Virgin-born.  
And all but one are gone, and she  
A little child of seven,  
Already clothed in novice robes,  
And to the altar given.  
Now far away she kneels and prays  
In sadness all alone,  
Though the little bell has sounded thrice,  
And all the nuns are gone.  
Too young they deem her—young in years  
And in her child-like ways;  
But oh! with them who love like her,

God reckons not by days.  
 For bright within Imelda's heart  
   There burned the saintly flame,  
   The love that like a holy fire  
     Straight from the altar came.  
 They knew not that it there had found  
   A sanctuary sweet;  
 They deemed it childish petulance  
   When she longed her Spouse to greet;  
 They heeded not her earnest prayers,  
   But left her there alone,  
 Bidding her dry her tears, and wait  
   Till she was older grown.

But oh ! the judgments of the Eternal God  
   Are not as man's;  
 We see the outward signs alone, but *He*  
   The bosom scans.  
 As arrow to the mark, His piercing glance  
   Flies quick and true  
 To where it finds the love of saintly souls,  
   His chosen few.  
 Oh, child, that love hath made thy little heart  
   His pleasant home:  
 Fear not, and weep no more; for He, thy Spouse,  
   Will surely come.

The people, startled from their prayers, behold a  
   wondrous sight—  
 Straight from the altar gleams along a line of daz-  
   zling light,  
 And a sudden awe falls on the priest who holds  
   the Sacred Host:

One moment It is in his hands, the next he feels  
It lost.

What means that path of radiant light? what  
means that shining star,  
Like that which once to Bethlem's home led sages  
from afar?

Over Imelda's childish head its radiant gleam ap-  
pears;

Her eyes are raised in worship—lo! it glitters in  
her tears;

Over that face of glowing love a smile of rapture  
plays,

For she knows *Whose* mystic Presence dwells  
amidst those wondrous rays.

He comes unto His own. Oh, let your doubting  
hearts believe,

Who feared to let the little one the Lord of life  
receive;

See how the radiance of the flame brighter and  
brighter glows,

Nor dare with human doubts to part the Bride-  
groom and the spouse.

So the priest came from the altar, and the people's  
ranks gave way,

And on the crowd a solemn hush of reverent  
wonder lay:

With trembling awe he takes the Host—O ec-  
stasy of bliss!

Imelda has received her Lord, and His espousal's  
kiss.

They raise her up: her sisters' hearts  
Are pierced with a sudden pang,  
As they feel how heavy on their arms

Their darling seems to hang.  
 One look into her face tells all:  
     It is no common swoon;  
 Life knows no loveliness like that—  
     That smile is death's alone.  
 Her arms are crossed upon her breast,  
     To hold her treasure fast:  
 For ever from that pale young brow  
     The look of earth hath passed.  
 A hue like that which flushes o'er  
     The early morning sky  
 Rests on her cheek—the token left  
     By the sudden ecstasy:  
 For oh ! the joy was all too great,  
     The little heart too small;  
 The love so strong—the frame so weak—  
     She could not bear it all.  
 We see not God and live; and ah !  
     *She had not seen alone,*  
 But He had come to her in love,  
     And made Himself her own.  
 The pang of joy hath snapped in twain  
     The cord that bound her down;  
 And the rays that shone above her head  
     Formed the first of her glorious crown.  
 The mighty love of that spousal kiss  
     Hath death's espousals given,  
 And she whose young heart broke with joy  
     Is now a saint in heaven !

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LONDON :  
PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,  
Great New Street and Fetter Lane.

# RICH AND POOR;

OR,

## Lady Adela and Grumbling Molly.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

## FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR;

## Or, Play and Earnest.



LONDON:

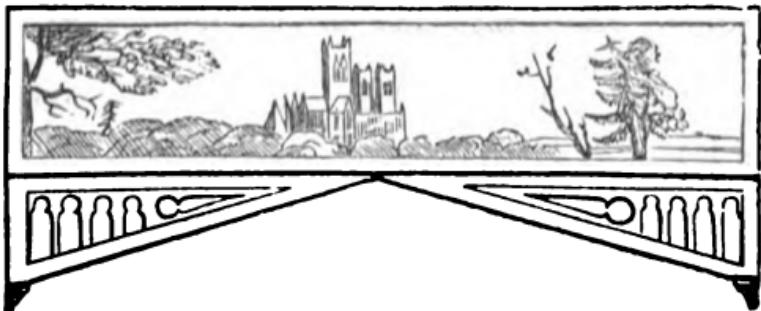
BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET.

SPAIN, PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

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1854.

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**PRINTED BY LEVEY, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,**  
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# RICH AND POOR;

OR,

## Lady Adela and Grumbling Molly.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### PRAYERS OUTSIDE.

 NE fine Sunday morning a group of women stood outside the door of the church in the little village of Somerton, in the county of —. The sound of the organ and the voices of the choir, heard from within, told plainly enough that the Mass was not concluded; while the ringing of the bell denoted that the priest was proclaiming the “*sanctus*,” and that the most holy part, the canon of the Mass, was about to begin.

How was it that these women stood chatting without the door, instead of kneeling in prayer

within? Have rags and misery nothing to ask from Heaven?

We fear that they belonged to that class among the poor who have fewest claims upon the alms of the rich—the class of beggars by profession, idlers, perhaps drunkards—lovers of gossip rather than lovers of prayer.

"We ought to have fine times of it now," said Kitty Malone, "now that the earl has come from abroad, and means to live at the Hall himself. The squire that is dead and gone would scorn to pass by on his hunter without throwing sixpence into the road, when he saw Kitty Malone standing at her door with the baby in her arms; and where a squire could give sixpence, sure an earl ought to make nothing of a shilling."

"Ah, it is not every one that has such a good heart as the squire," sighed one of Kitty's companions: "it did not require much to get round him; but his lady!—you must find out her weak point before you stood any chance with her."

"And that was easy found," replied another woman; "for she would believe any thing you told her, if you only said, 'Come and see with your own eyes, my dear good lady!' That was the way to manage her, sure enough; for she was so disgusted with the filth and the smell and the fever, and the very sight of poor people,—'it had such an effect upon her nerves,'" added the speaker in a drawling tone, intended to imitate that of a fine lady, "that if you only said, 'Come and see for yourself,' she would think nothing of half-a-crown and a heap of coal and soup tickets."

"Ay, ay," interposed a sharp-looking girl of

sixteen, "those coal-tickets used to sell well, and the soup was clear profit. Many a bucketful of pig's-wash have I sold at the squire's fancy farm, they little suspecting all the while it was made out of the soup from the squire's soup-kitchen!"

"What, have you got a bad hand again, Fanny?" said Kitty Malone, turning to the girl who last spoke.

"Yes," replied Fanny grinning, "it came on suddenly yesterday morning. It is to prevent my getting a place, with the most excellent of characters; and mother has bandaged it so well this time, that it would take in a doctor, and much more a fine lady."

"Has any body seen the family yet?" asked Molly Perkins; "can any one tell me what they are like?"

Just as these words were uttered, the door of the church opened, and the congregation began to pour out. Away hurried our acquaintances, each anxious to place herself in the position most favourable for attracting attention. Kitty Malone pinched her child to make it cry, and then sat on a stone hush-hushing it; Fanny Biggs assumed a look of suffering, and tenderly supported the elbow of her bandaged arm; while Molly Perkins, generally known by the sobriquet of 'Grumbling Molly,' fixed her back firmly against the church-wall, prepared to exercise the tacit right which her tongue had long ago obtained for her, that of making the first appeal to the compassion of every new-comer.

And now Lord Codlington appears, with his daughter Adela hanging on his arm. He is a

nervous-looking little man of sixty, apparently out of health. Lady Adela de Vaux is tall and graceful; her forehead and eyes are noble and expressive, the lower part of her face is concealed by a respirator, and she coughs slightly at her first encounter with the fresh air.

"Bless your ladyship! and health and long life to you, my lord! and please bestow a trifle on a poor creature that's starving," whined Molly, as she stretched out her hand.

"What is your name, my good woman?" asked Lady Adela.

"Molly Perkins, my lady; sixty-nine years my last blessed birth-day, which was the fourteenth of—."

"Come on, Adela," said her father, as he saw, on looking round, that Molly's appeal was only the first among many; "you must not stand here in the damp; I cannot allow it."

"You shall hear from me through Father Berlington," said Lady Adela, looking back as her father hurried her towards the carriage.

Kitty with her baby, Fanny, and the rest of the group followed, and surrounded the door, but all to no purpose. "Drive on," said Lord Codlington, as he took his seat; and the carriage with its occupants was soon borne beyond the reach of clamour.

"What do you think of that, now?" cried Grumbling Molly.

"Bad cess to them both!" exclaimed Kitty Malone.

"I will not be daunted, not I," said Fanny, flourishing her bandaged arm. "When the master

and mistress are stingy, the servants are always most on the look-out for what they can get ; and I shall manage to reap a good harvest yet, in selling broken victuals and kitchen fat for them, and carrying messages from the village to the kitchen backwards and forwards."

"As for me," said another of the group, "I will go and say to the new lady what I used to say to the old one—'Come, my dear good lady, and see with your own eyes.' A garret up four pair of stairs, a sick husband and seven children ; if that is not enough to keep her away, one can talk of typhus fever, and that will be sure to get a bottle of wine and plenty of nourishing victuals out of her. One can see by her thin shoes and shining silk dress that *she* is not one to go into garrets and up four pair of stairs."

"Hear from her through the priest indeed !" grumbled Molly ; "it is but little he would be after giving me, if he could help it. He has his favourites, like all the rest of them. It is a comfort to think, however, that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. Look at them, with their pride and their finery, their footmen and coachmen in silk stockings and gold lace, and their very horses' harness covered with silver! So long as they enjoy themselves, rolling in riches, they toss up their heads and scorn the poor. Yes, yes—we may live from hand to mouth, or starve, for any thing they care, before they will throw us a shilling, even outside the door of the blessed church itself."

"If you were now and then within the church-door instead of without, you might perhaps not

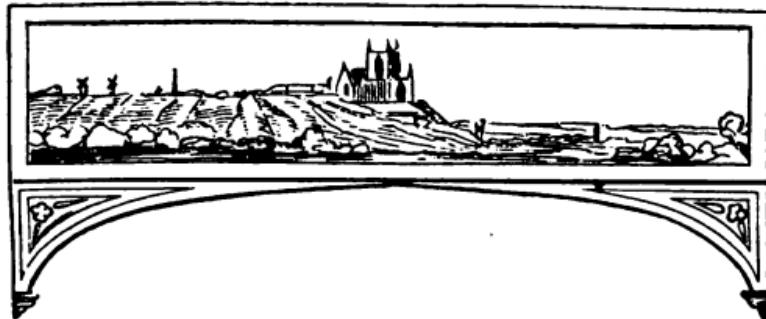
have quite so much to complain of," remarked little Jemmy Hervey, one of the serving-boys, who was just leaving the church.

"None of your bad language to me, you little villain," returned Molly, shaking her stick.

Jemmy ran to a safe distance, and then continued: "Yes, if you had been to Mass any day this week, you might have found out that Lady Adela has been here ever since last Monday, and that there are some poor people who have no cause to complain of her hard-heartedness." So saying, he ran off.

Who can describe the varied feelings that filled Molly's breast at this news? Disappointment, rage, envy, contended within her for mastery. Others had been beforehand with her in claiming the bounty of the new family at the Hall. To Molly another's gain always seemed like a personal loss. Her tongue being let loose, she spared neither friend nor foe; but she specially denounced Jane Hervey as a mean plotter, a hypocrite, who, under the garb of piety, monopolised the trade of begging. Whether these accusations were or were not well founded, the reader may judge in the next chapter.

In this evil humour Molly reached home, and even contrived to find fault with the dinner which her daughter-in-law had prepared to greet her arrival. Would you like to know what that dinner was? A leveret, which her son the poacher had trapped, a few days before, in Lord Codlington's woods; washed down with some fine cyder, made from the apples which the same hopeful son had robbed from Lord Codlington's orchards!



## CHAPTER II.

### PRAYERS INSIDE.

**M**OTHER herself does not know it yet ; how I long to tell her ! " said Jemmy to himself as he ran up the fields towards his home, jumped over the stile, and, disdaining the latch, cleared the garden-gate with a bound. " Mother ! " cried he, bursting headlong into the cottage, " guess who the lady is that found us out on Tuesday, and kept us all from starving or going to the union, which would have been worse still."

" How can I guess, my dear ? "

" No, indeed, you may well say that—how can you guess ? You might guess all day, and never find out. It is Lady Adela de Vaux herself."

" No, Jemmy dear, I think you must be mistaken, for they only arrived last night. I was sitting up mending a pair of stockings for you to be able to serve Mass to-day, and it was near twelve o'clock, when I heard something coming up the road ; I looked out of the window, and could just see that it was a dark travelling carriage with four greys."

"Yes, mother, all right ; that was my lord, who only arrived late last night ; but Lady Adela came with her maid on Monday, to see with her own eyes that every thing was made ready and comfortable for her father, who is rather a particular old gentleman."

"Where did you learn all this news, Jem?" asked his mother.

"Why from Henry, mother ; that is to say, from Lady Adela's page—such a nice boy ! No bigger than myself, but up to every thing, and covered all over with buttons. We had a chat together before Mass."

The expression "up to every thing" sounded rather alarming in the ears of the Widow Hervey, who dreaded nothing so much for her boy as bad acquaintances ; so she sought an explanation of the term.

"By 'up to every thing' I mean, of course, mother, that he knows a great deal more than I do, who can only run errands, or at best dig in the garden. Henry can read and write, and keep accounts ; he can clean plate, and answer the door, and speak properly to gentlefolks ; put the tray ready for the butler, and a thousand things besides ; and what is more, he reads Latin almost like a priest, and serves Mass a great deal better than any of the boys here ; for he was at the altar at High Mass, and I saw that myself."

Jane Hervey smiled on her boy ; her heart was at ease again on his account. "Well, it was Henry, then, who pointed out to you Lady Adela de Vaux ?"

"Oh, no, mother ; he had something else to do

than to think of me. He had to run to the carriage for a shawl, and stand waiting in the porch until she came out; and then he touched his hat like this, and held out the shawl; and when she said that she did not wish to put it on, he had to touch his hat again in the same way, and walk behind his lady to the carriage, with her shawl hanging over his arm. Oh, how happy I should be if I might do that, or any thing in the world for Lady Adela!"

"May all the saints of heaven look down upon her!" said the mother with a tremulous voice. "Be she gentle or be she simple, it is all one in the sight of Almighty God and in that of the poor widow. To me she was sent as a visible angel of mercy from heaven (thanks be to Him above!), and that is greater than being an earl's daughter, or any title this world has to give. Yes, and if the queen herself (God bless her!) were to come in this minute, I would not fear to say the same. Go down on your knees, my children, and let us say a Hail Mary for the Lady Adela."

The mother knelt with her little ones around her, and bending over the youngest, a child between three and four years old, she placed the little joined hands within her own, and repeated the prayer slowly and word by word, that little Mary might lisp it with the rest.

Jane Hervey deserves to have a few words spent upon her history; indeed a chapter would not be too much, could it but convey to the reader an idea of her humble piety and worth. Jane had lived many years a faithful servant in the late squire's family at the Hall, where, in the midst

of a disorderly and badly-conducted household, singularly careless of their religious duties, she had steadily persevered in a life of unobtrusive piety. Always did she fulfil the duties of her station with punctuality and exactness, taking St. Zita for her model, and endeavouring with a simple intention to perform every little action as though it had been a great one, in the most perfect manner she could. Yet somehow she managed to hear Mass every morning of her life, though none of her fellow-servants could explain the fact. They persuaded themselves and one another that, where there was so much work to be done, it was scarcely possible to *catch* Mass (as they expressed it) even on a Sunday or holiday. In vain did they try to believe that Jane's work was lighter than theirs; her place was that of under-housemaid, the hardest of all: and not only so; but was one of her fellow-servants taken ill, or out for a day of pleasure, which sometimes happened, Jane managed to do the work of the absent one in addition to her own, and with the same exactness, and yet contrived as usual to hear Mass.

Nor would her fellow-servants consent to accept Jane's own explanation of this matter in the words of the old proverb, "Meat and Mass never hinder work." As far as meat went, they carried out the idea, indeed, experimentally and with amazing perseverance—eating, drinking, and wasting food to their heart's content; but for the other and better half of the old saying, they left Jane to try it alone.

After ten years' service, Jane married, and for ten more short and happy years was the best of wives and of mothers. Then her husband fell ill.

A long and lingering consumption not only exhausted their little savings—for though but a day-labourer, John had, out of his little, put a little by—but compelled them to part by degrees with their furniture, and reduced them to extreme poverty. Nothing, however, could disturb their peace of mind, nor shake their confidence in God, nor interfere with their conformity to His adorable will. “ Could He not as easily send us riches as poverty ? It is, then, His will that we should be poor ; and if it were not best so for the good of our souls, He would make us rich instead of poor. Blessed be His holy name ! how could He show us a greater mercy than to send us here our purgatory ? Glory be to God ! And we have still a roof to cover us, while He had not where to lay His head when He came on earth to die for us. We have still a piece of bread for the children—there’s many that have none ; and it is not for our own deserts that we get that.” Full of these and other pious and grateful thoughts, they said their grace as devoutly before a scanty meal of dry bread as if they were sitting down to a turtle-feast.

With all these consolations, were Jane and her husband indifferent to the afflictions of life, and careless of the sufferings of their children ? Oh, no ; far from it. They had hearts of flesh and not of stone—hearts that ached wearily, and eyes that wept ; but every tear was shed as in the sight of God, without fretfulness or impatience ; every pang of heart was daily offered up before His altar in the presence of that adorable Victim of sacrifice, with whose sufferings they united their own. They prayed for temporal relief,—yes, earnestly and fer-

vently they prayed that, if it were possible, this chalice of bitter sorrow might be taken away from them; but whilst praying, they knew that their prayers were answered, though they saw not how; nor did they cease to persevere in prayer, nor did they waver in faith, when day after day, month after month, and almost year after year, matters appeared to grow worse instead of better.

What is this world, with all it contains? Not only did the man feel its nothingness, when, with a soul fortified by the sacraments of holy Church, and well prepared to meet his God, he gave out his last breath at the foot of the crucifix, which he pressed to his dying lips; not only did the wife feel its emptiness when she surrendered to her God the one earthly object of her love, the partner of her very being, and found herself alone;—but the little children, rendered wise by poverty and hunger, felt it too; and no affection for earthly joys dimmed their souls, when, after saying the Litany for the Dead, they fervently hoped that the holy angels had already brought their father into the land of the living, and the glorious Queen of Heaven had presented him before the throne of God, and simply asked that they might soon go too.

O poverty! thy wisdom is better than any that can be taught in other schools!

Less than a week before our story opens, John was buried, and his wife had sold even the bed he lay on to pay for his funeral. After a sleepless night spent on a bed of straw, Jane rose as usual, dressed her children, and before taking them to Mass threw open the door of the cupboard. "Look, my children," said she; "it is empty. Let us go

and pray to God to give us this day our daily bread: He only knows where we are to find it."

Mass was over, and they were quitting the church, when a young lady, plainly dressed in a brown cloak and straw-bonnet, passed them. In that moment Jemmy had opened the door, and stood holding it open for his mother; but the poor widow had dropped once more on her knees as she turned towards the altar, with lips moving in prayer and eyes streaming with tears. Adela de Vaux—for she it was—read hunger in the faces of the children as clearly as she read sorrow in that of the mother. Unwilling to obtrude herself upon the poor mourner's notice, and still more unwilling to interrupt her prayer, she slipped a half-crown into the hand of the youngest child. At the same moment, Jane, quite unconscious of the lady's presence, rose to leave the church, and took little Mary up in her arms.

Now it had always been the custom of John and Jane to make their little offerings, whether to the poor or to the altar, through the hands of their children. In the worst of times, a halfpenny now and then had been forthcoming for this purpose; and happy was the child to whom the office of almoner was given. It was the greatest reward any of them knew or conceived. Thus it happened that little Mary, who had never handled money except for this purpose, and who was too young to understand that it had any other use, very simply turned towards the box as her mother carried her past it, and dropped in the half-crown, while her eyes sparkled with delight.

Jemmy, who had seen the whole transaction,

burst into tears. "O Mary!" exclaimed he, sobbing, "what have you done? Mother, mother! a lady put half-a-crown into Mary's hand just now, and she has dropped it into the box! We shall have no bread to-day!"

"Which box was it, my bird?" said Jane, caressing her child as she spoke, while a clear and hopeful smile lighted up her pale face.

The child pointed joyfully to the box.

"Yes," sobbed Jem, "I saw her do it; it was for the altar of our Lady."

"Don't begrudge it in your heart, Jem," said the widow. "Glory be to God! He never refuses the prayer of His blessed Mother, nor the offering of the innocent babe. It will bring us bread for to-day and to-morrow too;" and with smiles and kisses she blessed her child, and pressed her closer to her bosom again and again, as she walked back hungry to her empty home.

Adela, lingering at the door unobserved, had seen and heard all this. The reader may perhaps imagine that, as a matter of course, she immediately overtook Jane Hervey, gave her a sovereign or two for present necessities, with the promise of a pension for the future, in honour of the good action she had just witnessed. Not so; Adela de Vaux knew better; she had too much delicacy of feeling, too much sympathy for real piety, too much reverence for that which passes between God and the soul which adores Him, to disturb such heart-workings by any thing like human praise, or insult them by the semblance of earthly reward. She stood and watched poor Jane, as she wended

her way to the village, with nothing short of a sister's love; she breathed an ardent prayer to heaven for the widow and orphans; she thanked God for giving her the means to help those whom He so loved, and who so loved Him; and she hastened to place those means at the disposal of the priest, Father Berrington, who promised most gladly to see that every pressing want was supplied.

It was not until a day or two after, that Lady Adela visited several of the poor people, and Jane among the number, as a matter of course, showing no distinction of manner between her and the rest of her neighbours; nor will Jane ever know what first drew upon her the notice of Adela de Vaux, unless she happen to read this book, which is not likely.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE DIAMONDS.

*Extract from the Court and County Chronicle.*

“ Her Majesty’s visit to Elswater and its neighbourhood.

“ Yesterday, Thursday, her Majesty gave a *bal paré* to the élite of Elswater and its neighbourhood, at her summer residence of Kennicourt Castle. Her Majesty entered the ball-room precisely at ten o’clock, through the new conservatories, which were splendidly festooned with flowers and illuminated with coloured lamps. Her Majesty danced the first quadrille with the Archduke of Spitsheinselt, and their *vis-à-vis* were Prince Albert and the beautiful Lady Adela de Vaux, who, by the express command of her Majesty, wore on this occasion the celebrated Shumsheepore diamonds, which, as the public already know, were re-set at Storr and Mortimer’s, and presented to Lady Adela by her Majesty, in testimony of the distinguished services rendered to government by the Earl of Codlington, when he put an end to the Burmese war by annihilating the Rajah of Shumsheepore, and taking possession, in so gallant a style, of his camp and jewels.”

Thus far the Court and County Chronicle.

On the evening of the fête so described, a crowd of poor villagers surrounded Lord Collington's gate. It was the day on which the housekeeper distributed the little weekly pensions, and the other bounties, in doles and in food, of the Lady Adela. The report had gone abroad, that Lady Adela, attired in the wonderful Burmese precious stones, was going to the queen's ball at Kennicourt; and twenty or thirty women and children had waited for hours to see her and her diamonds step into the carriage. Diamonds! Had any one among them ever seen a real diamond? It was decidedly worth while to stand for hours in the rain for the bare chance of beholding real diamonds. So at least many of them thought as they remained at their post, in patient expectation of a moment still distant.

Adela looked from her window at the louring clouds, and rang for her maid.

"What are those poor people waiting for, Percival?" said she. "I do not like to have them detained; the time of the poor is valuable. Go, see that they have their alms at once, that they may return home."

"They received them hours ago, my lady," replied Percival; "but they begged permission to wait outside until the carriage drives off."

"To see me in full dress, I suppose," rejoined Adela, with a grave smile. "Well, they must not remain there to be deluged by the thunder-shower which is coming, nor shall they be disappointed: bring them into the lobby, Percival, and let them wait there."

In the lobby they waited in intense expectation

for nearly two hours longer, while nothing was heard save the patterning of the rain on the windows, unless when a subdued whisper was felt through the stillness,—“She will soon come now,”—“She cannot be much longer.”

At length the gas is suddenly raised; and to those accustomed to sew all night long by the light of a solitary rush-candle, the lobby seems in a blaze of sunshine. Lord Codlington and his daughter descend the stairs, and walk slowly between the ranks; he bows courteously to the right and the left as he passes along; Lady Adela adds frequently to her bow a smile of recognition. One hand, the left, is gloved in snowy white; the other, holding its covering, and scarcely less white, is glancing with jewels. Once she kisses her hand; it is to little Mary Hervey, who seems ready to spring with delight from the arms of her mother: once she stoops, so simply, so naturally, and picking up a stick, presents it to the old woman, who in the act of curtsying had dropped it. That old woman is Grumbling Molly. And now Lady Adela disappears, the carriage is heard to roll away, and the spectators disperse to their several homes.

“What were the diamonds like, after all, mother?” said little Jem Hervey. “I don’t know much more about them than if I had never seen them. How big are they, I wonder? If I could only see them close, and have them in my hand, that would be worth something; but they looked only like so many flashes that were no where and every where at once; and they jumped about so, that I could not make them out at all. What were they like?”

"I did not see them, my boy," answered Jane.

"Oh, mother, you must be blind not to have seen them, and after waiting such a time too! What in the world were you looking at, that you did not see the diamonds?"

Jane answered not: she had seen more than Jem could understand; her mind was full of the vision of Lady Adela; something had won her heart, had entranced her imagination; but it was not the splendour of the diamonds.

A lady in gay attire and adorned with jewels was no new sight to Jane Hervey. Her former mistress had been greatly addicted to finery, and had worn a profusion of jewelry,—whether real or mock, Jane was both too ignorant to distinguish, and too philosophical to care; but how unlike were the former occupant of the Hall and Lady Adela! Jane thought of *her* beauty and radiance as of something almost superhuman, and asked herself, "If she is so lovely on earth, what will she be when we see her in heaven?" But what haunted Jane's memory the most was the mild and steady light of those downcast eyes, with their expression of patient waiting for something they ardently longed for; and the sweet calm smile, that looked as though it reflected some treasured thought far, far away from hence.

Yet were her thoughts certainly present, for she knew her poor friends, each and all, as she passed along. How sweetly did she smile at little Mary! how quickly did she stoop for Molly's stick! and her manner of restoring it was more than condescending, it was gracious; nay, it was more than

gracious, it was deferential; yet all the while she seemed like one living elsewhere.

"Well, that must have touched even the heart of Grumbling Molly," said Jane to herself.

Alas, it is not so easy to touch a heart long hardened by selfishness, and encased in jealousy and spite. Jane beheld Lady Adela, and her alone: Molly saw nothing but the diamonds





## CHAPTER IV.

### THE POACHER'S WIFE.

 WHILE Lady Adela was dancing her first quadrille, Molly Perkins sat at home by the fire, her feet on the fender, her elbows on her knees, her head on her hands, in gloomy silence. This silence seemed too ominous to be interrupted by her daughter-in-law, who, after putting the child to bed, placing the potatoes on the fire, and laying the table for supper, against her husband's return, took her knitting, and sat quietly on the opposite side of the table, waiting for Molly to speak first.

"What did you get to-day, Martha?" said Molly at length.

"My sixpence a-week, mother, and a pretty purple cotton dress for little Elizabeth."

"Oh, yes, indeed!" replied Molly, scornfully; "and small thanks to them! Them that can dress up their dogs in velvet and silver, may well bestow a sixpenny cotton on a poor child that is running about half naked."

Molly here alluded to a beautiful little Italian

greyhound, a pet of the old lord's, which she had seen jump into the carriage after Adela one chilly morning, clothed in its little jacket of blue velvet, on which the Codlington arms were embroidered in silver.

Martha, after going on with her knitting for some little time, at last ventured to speak.

"And you, mother, what did they give you?"

"No matter what they gave," returned Molly, angrily; "not half as much as they ought, with all their riches; that is all you need know about it, so keep your curiosity to yourself."

This question of Martha's was certainly an imprudent one; indeed, those things which are said merely for the sake of breaking an awkward silence, generally turn out unfortunately; and this was no exception to the rule, for it touched a very tender point.

What Molly gained in the course of her profession as a beggar was a profound secret, locked closely within her own breast. Even her only and darling son Robert could make no guess as to the contents of his mother's old chest, nor did he in the least suspect that at sundry times Molly had risen in the dead of the night to sew considerable sums of money inside the bed on which he supposed her to be lying fast asleep. Many a time had he contemplated and even planned a stolen peep into the oak chest; but Molly's generalship was too much for him, and baffled all his attempts to gain possession of the key. That key rested all day in his mother's pocket, and all night it lay under her head; and Robert felt that he must await the time when it became his by inhe-

ritance, for that nothing could part Molly and her key—nothing short of *murder*.

God help thee, Robert, and forgive thy sin of thought ere it ripen into deed! Thou hast an angel guardian, who has clung to thee ever since the days of thy innocence, and who with many tears has pleaded for thee again and again, when covetous desire of worldly possessions has led thee to look forward with complacency to the death of a parent. Had it not been for this, who knows whether such thoughts might have led thee?

God help thee, Robert! Long hast thou forgotten how to pray, and hast grown skilful the while in robbery, and hardened in crime. The white robe of thy baptism is sullied throughout, and discoloured with every stain, save that of blood. But thou hast a wife who prays; and who in her faith to God remembers also her faithfulness to thee. Thy little girl Elizabeth also had even now thy unworthy name on her innocent lips, and sent it up to heaven by the mouth of a host of saintly messengers whom she asked to pray for thee, especially the Queen of Heaven, who knows the voice of Elizabeth, and always answers her prayers, as she will herself tell thee when she awakes, for now she lies buried in that profound sleep known to childhood, and to childhood only.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE TEMPTER.

**M**ORE than half an hour Martha has stood at the window, looking out into the dark. The old mother does not see her form as it trembles, nor hear her teeth as they chatter; but Martha starts suddenly, and utters a low cry.

"What is the matter now?" said Molly.

"Mother, I think I heard a gun-shot."

"You great fool!" replied Molly, "it was nothing but a coal that flew from the fire; there it is; see for yourself."

Martha turned anxiously to assure herself of the fact, and then resumed her post at the window, signing herself with the holy sign of the cross.

"What ails you?" growled Molly, "that you are always tormenting me with fancying gun-shots?"

"Oh, mother, I cannot help it," said Martha, while quiet tears rolled down her cheeks.

Dearly did Robert love his gentle wife, as indeed she well deserved of him; more than that, he reverenced her, and had a sort of superstitious feeling connected with her piety, which, without

leading him to abandon his evil courses, made him feel as though he had some protection from heaven within his reach, and even at times induced the thought that one of these days he might repent and reform. He loved her after a fashion, if selfish affection, if involuntary admiration, can be called love; but he never thought of the agony he inflicted upon her, day after day and night after night. He never spoke to her of his evil intentions; these he confided, in words and detail, only to his mother: but he knew that Martha was aware of them; and often, in the midst of his wicked acts, when he had ceased to remember the ever-wakeful eye of God, who sees all, he blushed and trembled in the dark, when he thought of that mortal eye that was at home and awake, and that guessed so well what he was about.

Yes, Molly had well said that Martha was full of fancies; her nerves were constantly on the stretch; and at night every little sound appeared to her like the distant report of fire-arms. She well knew Robert's nightly occupation and its dangers, and continually pictured to herself the hour when he might be brought home mortally wounded; or worse, be sent to die in a gaol, without her tender care, and without the helps of religion; or worse still, when he might come to his home, as a fugitive to his hiding-place, safe indeed himself, but with the blood of another on his hands, and the mark of Cain on his forehead. Oh, horror beyond horror!

These were the nightly risks which her husband ran, and against which poor Martha could offer no other defence than such as her prayers could afford—her poor prayers; and these had not

yet obtained any apparent answer. No fear ever showed itself on his part, no compunction. He talked of his good luck boastingly, and spoke of hair-breadth escapes as proofs of his own consummate skill and readiness; whilst each anecdote of nightly adventure was eagerly listened to by his mother, and responded to by a laugh, which sounded fiendish enough in the ears of Martha.

"He is late to-night," said Molly; "we shall have some good fun, you may be sure, when he comes home, but in the mean time we can begin our supper without him."

"I hear his step now, mother," said Martha; "it rustles among the leaves of the coppice; now he leaps the gate of the wood—I heard him throw his bag and his gun over first—Stingo is running before him—there goes the garden-gate—he is safe, he is here!"

She flew to the latch, and threw her arms round him as he entered.

"Well, old woman," said Robert, with a smile, "you are tired of waiting for me, are you? See, I have brought you a hansel. Here is your first brace of partridges: I picked them by the light of the setting moon, as I waited under the hedge till the gamekeeper had done his rounds, and have brought them home for supper. There is a famous fire; our appetite will keep for another quarter of an hour; and there is no occasion for *us* to wait until the first of September, you know."

"They are not worth eating, so fresh," grumbled Molly; "they are no better than common chickens till they are kept ten days or so."

"Now or never," answered Robert. "It would

not be safe to keep them in the house, particularly now that Elizabeth is going to school: who knows what might be the consequences if the child mentioned them to her companions?"

"Why need she go to school at all?" said Molly.

Martha looked up anxiously, and met the eye of her husband. He smiled good-humouredly, whilst he replied, "I think it will please my missis; that is something. Besides, without any reflections on the rest of the honourable company here assembled at present, I have a notion that my missis is worth the whole lot of us put together, and I shall have no objection for Betsy to grow up like her."

To this compliment Molly laughingly assented. "Yes," said she; "since she is a girl, it is as well to keep the little one out of harm's way. If you had had a boy, it would have been another matter."

"Ah, wouldn't we go it," replied Robert, "if I had a son that took after me!"

'We catch'd a hare alive, my boys, and when we'd knock'd un down,  
 We took un to a farmer's house and sold un for a crown;  
 We sold un for a crown, my boys, but I won't tell you where—  
 No! 'tis my delight of a shiny night in the season of the year.' "

And Molly, with great gusto, joined in the refrain—

"No! 'tis my delight of a shiny night in the season of the year."

When Robert praised the goodness of his wife, as he did just now, such praise excited no ill-

feeling in Molly. Had he implied any superiority in knowingness, in skilful deceit, in impudent begging, Molly would have felt a rivalship, and would have disputed each attribute inch by inch. To Martha his praise gave, alas, but little pleasure. She had long urged the point of Elizabeth's schooling, now she had gained a full and willing consent; but she looked at the birds as they were turning before the fire, and felt forcibly the justice of Robert's apprehension lest one day the child in its simplicity should betray the father to his destruction.

"Robert dear," said she, and her voice slightly trembled as she spoke, "I think mother is right: we had better not send Elizabeth to school until—"

She did not finish. Robert looked away; he had not courage to encounter the timid glance of his wife, lest he should see in it some hope of better things in him for a future day, which would only spoil his present appetite for the partridges. These were now ready; nor did either Molly or Robert seem to remark, whilst they enjoyed them, that Martha observed her usual habit of refraining from tasting the ill-gotten dainty.

Supper being ended, Martha retired to her room, leaving old Molly to put on her night-cap by the fire, according to her custom, whilst Robert took his glass of grog and smoked his pipe before going to rest. Scarcely had she shut the door, when Molly began on the subject which had been all the evening uppermost in her thoughts—Lady Adela de Vaux and her diamonds.

Well did Molly know the soil into which that night she cast so many germs of iniquity. Skil-

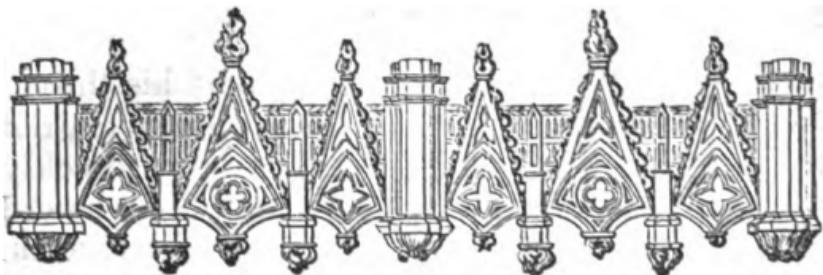
fully did she prepare it for her purpose. First she ploughed it up, as though for the reception of good seed that was to bring forth a hundredfold. The love of justice, the hatred of avarice, the contempt of that wanton display which took delight in dazzling with its splendour the eyes of the hard-living poor, as though in mockery of their wants;—such was her theme, until she saw that her words had taken root, and then did she scatter freely the cockle of avarice, hatred, covetousness, and desperate daring. And the way seemed so easy. Two or three only of the diamonds sewed on Lady Adela's stomacher would be a fortune for Elizabeth; and they would never be missed, or they might be supposed to have dropped off accidentally. There were ways and means for those that had any spirit, particularly in the country, where there were no police about, and where all the approaches to the Hall were so well known. For her part, she saw no more harm in taking a brace of diamonds than a brace of partridges, and one could be spared just as well as the other.

Robert said nothing: he let his mother have her talk out, and heard her hobble up into her garret, and carefully lock the door. Then it was that he knocked the ashes out of his pipe, filled another glass of toddy (too faithful a seconder of his mother's counsels), and began to brood over her words one by one.

The clock struck twelve; he arose, searched in a drawer for an old crape hatband, with which he might cover his face should disguise be expedient; he also chose some tools, which he placed in his pocket; he changed his coat for a blue smock-

frock, tied a large handkerchief round his throat, and quietly opened the door. He turned back, not without hesitation, and finally took down quickly a brace of pistols, muttering to himself as he did so, "Only in case of necessity," and he left the house. Oh ! had he yielded only to one good impulse, and that merely a natural one, he might never have set forth on that dreadful errand. Had he gone in to say "good night" to Martha, and to tell her he was going out again for the night, as he sometimes did when he only went poaching, he might have returned to better feelings at seeing her still on her knees praying, with many tears, for him. But he passed by that door, and walked out into the dark night ; and she heard him go, and watched for him till the morning.—Will she ever see him again ?





## CHAPTER VI.

### OUT IN THE DARK NIGHT.

T was past two o'clock in the morning which followed the Festival of the Assumption, when Lord Codlington and his daughter drove up the avenue, on their return from the queen's fête at Kennicourt.

"This is the proudest day of my life," said he. "How well our Queen knows how to confer honours! How gracefully she doubled her favours to me by bestowing them also upon you! This is the proudest, the happiest day of my life!"

Adela pressed her father's hand in reply, and leaned towards the window. "Here we are at home," said she; "how dark the night is, and how oppressively hot! Are those thunder-clouds, I wonder?" And she put down one of the glasses of the carriage.

The movement forward threw the hood of her opera-cloak a little back, and part of her head-dress flashed for one moment in the light of the carriage-lamp. There was one standing hidden behind the trunk of a giant elm, who saw that meteor-light, and held his breath—it was Robert. "Yes," thought he, "my mother said truly: that

prize is worth any risk." He felt for his pistols — should an alarm be given, they are there ; but — "only in case of necessity."

When the carriage had passed, Robert moved stealthily away, and creeping close along the wall, planted himself under the window of Lady Adela's chamber, there to await with impatient anxiety the moment when all candles should be extinguished, and the feeble glimmer of the night-light should tell of sleep. There would be time to accomplish his work ere the day broke.





## CHAPTER VII.

### LADY ADELA ALONE WITH HER TREASURE.

HERE, leave them all where they are for to-night, Percival," said Lady Adela, as she exchanged her ball attire for a dressing-gown. "I want nothing more of you now, so you may go to bed."

"If you please, my lady," answered Percival, "my mind would be easier and more comfortable if I saw them safe in the strong-box to-night as usual."

"No, no, Percival ; you must let me have my own way for once. It would take you a couple of hours to unsew all the jewels on my dress, and to compare them with the inventory. It is a very different affair when we are in town ; but here, you know, we are safe among our own dear, simple poor, who know nothing of covetousness, and never dream of robbery. Since I make you rise early, I am bound in conscience to secure you a little sleep ; and the jewels will be safe enough to-morrow, you will see."

"True, my lady ; the people here are, as you say, uncommonly stupid, and not up to half the things that come to Londoners, as it were, by

nature. I am sure, as those country folks stood gaping to-day in the lobby and staring at your ladyship, one would have thought they had never seen more of life, no, nor had more sense in their heads, than the dumb animals in the fields. There is no fear, indeed, that *their* clumsy hands should ever stand a chance of employment with our London swell-mob."

"Good night, Percival."

"Good night, my lady."

Percival is gone, and the door is locked; Robert saw the light move, and distinguished the shadow of Lady Adela as she crossed the window. His impatience became irresistible; he cautiously raised a ladder, which he had previously conveyed to the spot, ascended it, and screened by the thick ivy which covered the turreted wall, peeped through the dark foliage into the window.

Lady Adela was in the act of pressing a secret spring in her escritoire: she takes out a key, and proceeds to unlock and to open a drawer of her wardrobe. She leans with both her elbows on its edge, clasps her hands together, and remains for some minutes gazing on the contents of that drawer. What can they be? He will see by and by; something, without doubt, of inestimable value. The jewels which lately adorned her person are lying on the slab above that hidden treasury; she pushes them aside as though they were things of nought, to make room for something far more precious; and taking that unseen something out of the drawer, she places it in the midst of them. Her head is bowed over it, her hands press it to her bosom, her long fair hair falls around it, like a

rich curtain of silk and gold. At length she closes the drawer; and, with a candle in one hand, and her unknown treasure in the other, moves across the room.

Now he will see.

Ha! what noise is that? In his eagerness he has forgotten prudence; the sudden movement of his head has loosened some rubble from the wall, and it rattles from branch to branch as it makes its way through the ivy to the ground. Adela starts, and turning towards the window listens for a moment. All is again silent. She supposes that some night-bird has sallied from its nest, and thinks not of it again.

Robert looks no more—he has seen enough; all his suspicions have been confirmed. The brilliants that Lady Adela now holds in her hand outshine all the rest; and without doubt she conceals them from human eye, and visits them by night, as his mother visits her oak chest, to gloat over them in secret, and to count their value. He stirs not—he scarcely breathes; he has seen and can wait, for now he is sure of them. The key is still in the drawer; and by the lingering look she gave as she closed it, he knows that that drawer is not empty. Whatever the contents may be, they are his—they are his before day, cost what they will. It is well he thought of bringing his pistols, for there may be necessity.

He looks not again; but we will look, and see what Adela is about.

She kneels at her oratory; in her hand is a rosary: every bead is of lapis-lazuli, linked together with golden chainlets of exquisite work-

manship; but what is that to her? Those beads have been blessed by the Vicar of Christ—this makes them rich in her eyes: more than that, they have touched the walls of the holy House of Loretto; and ever since that day their most eloquent discourse to her has been of poverty! Yes, long, long since has her heart lain like them in that holy home; and its humble fervent desires are well known both to Him who once dwelt therein, and to those who watched His sacred infancy.

It is already Friday morning, and she meditates on the sorrowful mysteries of the Passion of her Lord. Does not the brilliant scene she has so lately quitted cause some distraction in her thoughts? No, a thousand times no!—where her treasure was, there all the while has been her heart. Her thoughts have made for themselves a house to dwell in, so safe that the noise of the world is never heard within it, or if it enter, is overpowered by sweet concerts of celestial music; and the roof of that house, like the roof of the olden temple, is so spiked with gold, that though the sparrows may twitter around the eaves, they cannot rest there nor defile it. Truly she is now in royal company; and what does she say? Her lips repeat ever the same words: one 'Our Father,' ten 'Hail Marys,' and again and again and again. But who shall speak the thoughts that those words fan with their heavenly wings, and then bear up on strong pinions to the very throne of God? Yes, she is in royal company: she watches with her Lord as He prays, with His face to the earth, in the grotto of Gethsemane; she seeks out His sorrowing Mother, that

they may sorrow together; and then she returns to help with her fervent prayers of love the angels who are sent to comfort Him. She accompanies that blessed Virgin Mother (the only mother she ever remembers to have known) through every station of new agony; and all is so real, so present to her thoughts, that one would think she was really supporting that Mother's sinking form, and pressing that cold hand, and resting on her bosom that weary aching head, when the Lord of all tottered and fell before her eyes, under the heavy weight of His cross. Thus does she walk on with those two, from one to another, without quitting either, until all is consummated; and then, for a while, she remains in silent adoration: no word, no utterable thought, but an interchange of heart far beyond either. Oh, who can tell the secrets of true love? None but those between whom they are whispered. Her heart has entered the wound in that sacred side where beats the Heart of hearts; and as Its pulses send forth their stream of life, all purifying, all vivifying, she feels them mingle with her own.

And now, while in broken words she utters the first wish of her heart, she bends reverently over that mysterious galaxy of jewels which she had placed on the altar ere her prayer began. It is a reliquary, in whose rich enclosure is contained a treasure beyond price; a portion of the True Cross is there, and she speaks to Him who died thereon: "Let Thy Tears be my diamonds, Thy Blood my rubies, Thy Thorns my crown! Shall I be rich, while I see Thee thus? My Lord, Thou knowest

that I love Thee; make me like Thee—make me poor!"

Now is the reliquary replaced in the drawer. Adela advances and opens the window, for the night is oppressive in its warmth; she retires into her dressing-room; soon the candles are extinguished, and ere long she is asleep.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE ROBBER.



QUARTER past three. Now is your time, Robert; the nights are short, and delay is dangerous. She must be asleep ere this; and if not, you are in for it now, and must not stand upon trifles.

No obstacle presented itself: the very window seemed to have been opened to invite his noiseless entrance. The room was dark, but a faint light gleamed through the half-open door of the dressing-room. It proceeded from a small silver lamp, and by extending his arm he reached it without entering. He moved with it stealthily to the bedside; he must ascertain whether the lady is fast asleep; he can hold the lamp before her eyes to see. He parted the curtains of rich damask; he saw the coverlid of satin spread smoothly over the plump bed of down; but no Lady Adela was there. He lighted his dark lantern, and returned with the lamp to the dressing-room door, where he listened awhile to the calm regular breathings of sweet unmistakeable slumber. Were it not best to take back the lamp, lest its absence should too suddenly suggest an alarm in case she awoke? He entered cautiously, and found that it had been

burning before an image of the Blessed Virgin. It was well he had thought of replacing it: what would Martha say if she knew he had removed it, and for such a purpose? The rapid thought made a coward of him for the moment, and he set the lamp hastily down in its place again. He heard a slight sound; Adela had moved in her sleep. Was she about to awake? He closed his hand on his pistol, and turned to see. No; there she lay, calmly sleeping on a little curtainless iron bedstead, with its hard thin mattress and coarse covering; there she lay sleeping, with her beads round her wrist, and her arms meekly crossed. He scarcely saw her, for he looked at once away, and slunk back into the adjoining room, involuntarily hiding his weapon, though there were none near to see it; and for a moment or two he stood trembling, and almost forgot what errand he had come upon. Let us do him justice; he could not have found it in his heart just then to hurt a hair of her head.

Robert, however, was not a man to turn aside from plunder. Avarice asserted her rights over him, and soon reminded him again that he had no time to throw away. He drew a canvas bag from under his smock-frock, swept into it all the ornaments that were lying on the slab, and then proceeded, in expectation of untold riches, to open the mysterious drawer. What did he see? A mass of black stuff and of white surge! How came a religious habit there? What was it for? What did it conceal? An idea *would* flash across his mind, and it troubled him, until the voice of covetousness spoke louder than all else within or around him, and directed his attention to the glare of precious

stones. Eagerly he grasped the reliquary, carried it hastily to the little oratory where he had set down his dark lantern, and kneeling on the floor, the better to examine it in the narrow stream of light, he perceived at once its purpose; he recognised in the centre the once well-known sign of redemption, whilst around the border was an inscription, formed by those brilliants which had so dazzled his senses; and he read, as in letters of flame, the words—

“Ave, crux vera!  
Ave, spes mea!”

And he has dared to covet this! He has borne it off as plunder in one hand, while the other clutched a weapon of death! Well may he set it down in haste, as though it scorched him to the bone; well may he place his pistols on the ground, and cover his face with his hands; well may he kneel and tremble, though he dares not *pray*; for the guilty hand, ready but now to dip itself in blood rather than quit its plunder, refuses to make that sign, the beginning, the end, the soul of prayer, which might speak of pardon, even to such as he!

Martha, Martha, wake up! this is no time to yield to drowsiness. Cease not those prayers with which all the night you have been wearying Heaven for Robert! This is for him an hour of danger, an hour of darkness—“*Ave, crux vera!*”

O words of terror, how fearfully do they glare upon him! If you could but see him now as he cowers there on his knees! This is a fearful mo-

ment for him. He believes and trembles; but will this save him? No, no, never! The devils also do the same. Those words will drive him to despair, and join him for ever to that unholy company, unless he knows how to hope. O Martha, pray for him, that he may learn also to cry, "*Ave, spes mea!*"

Four o'clock has struck, and where is Robert? Still in the same place, yet far away; he is living over again the days of his childhood: he enters a long-forgotten chamber of death, to receive the last blessing of a father; he feels the icy-cold hand that was there placed upon his head, and hears the feeble voice bidding him serve God as long as he lived, and never to neglect his prayers. And now he goes with his satchel to school, and the good Jesuit Fathers teach him, and make his tasks so pleasant and so holy at once. Now he is playing in the sunny corn-field with his little brother (long since in heaven), when they hear the *Angelus*, and kneel down in the path, quitting their play to repeat their noon-day prayer. Oh, he is no longer the same Robert whom we knew just now; he is a child with golden hair, who stands in the sanctuary to serve at the Holy Sacrifice; his worst distractions come from the rainbow-tints that stream from the coloured windows upon his white surplice, or that paint with fainter hues the clouds of incense rising between him and the image of our Blessed Lady, which he was so fond of looking at, until she seemed to smile upon him, when he would shut his eyes and then open them again, that he might fancy the same thing over and over. Oh, how she seemed to look down upon him that day, above

all, when he and his little brother made their first communion !

Their first communion ! Was there ever, could there ever, have been such a day for him as that, when our Lord entered indeed into his innocent breast, sending before Him joy and peace and pardon ? Pardon for what ? He saw the faults of his childhood ; they stood before him one by one, so thoughtlessly committed, so quickly repented of. They seemed to him now almost like virtues, in such simple garb were they arrayed ; yet these had he humbly confessed, for these (in the days of his childhood) had he shed bitter tears of contrition. And now!—

He bowed himself down before the image of Him whom he had crucified afresh ; his lips uttered no prayer, nor did his hand make the sign of salvation, but the floodgates of his heart burst open. Martha, your prayer is about to be answered ; for if contrition comes first, hope will soon follow. One long gasping breath, and now the tears gush forth ; Robert is become again a child ; he weeps ! see, he weeps !

No note does he take of time, place, or circumstance ; nor is thought or memory any longer busy within him. He asks not for pardon, he has not yet thought of it ; he only feels that it was he who thrust the cruel nails into those innocent feet, who pierced the tender hands that were stretched out to bless him, who drove the sharp thorns into that sacred brow. Wretch that he is, all unworthy of grace or of pardon, what can he do but throw himself at the foot of that cross, there to await the sentence which he cannot gainsay, and to own its

justice in the face of heaven and earth? In his own just condemnation he sees its glory the more distinctly proclaimed; and whilst he beats his breast again and again in self-accusation, his lips, however unworthy, will utter the words, "*Ave, crux vera!*"

The clock strikes five. Up, Robert, up! it is high time for you to be gone. The birds are already whispering their soft morning song in the branches; the fresh breeze of dawn comes balmily through the open window; soon will the cow-boy go whistling past to his early task, and if he spy that ladder, what will become of you? You will be lost. He heeds not, he stirs not. The first ray of the summer sun flashes suddenly upon him, and with it the thought of Lady Adela, and he starts to his feet, and remembers it all. There lay the canvas bag filled with the plunder, which little more than an hour since it seemed so easy to carry away and call his own; there lay the pistols at his feet, which now seem fraught with murder, but which last night he only regarded as tools; before his eyes the reliquary, with its letters of flame, shone in the morning beam, while his lantern still burnt beside it; and in himself he saw no longer the child of his dreams, but the robber. And there is the half-open door; what if she who sleeps within should awake, and find him where he is? He hastened to the window, descended the ladder unobserved, laid it on the ground, and fled across the fields.

He fled, but not towards his home; he shrank from the meeting with his wife: "She is too good," thought he, "to look again upon so guilty a wretch

as I am!" And as for his mother,—God forgive her!—her image rose before him, not as that of the mother who had borne him in pain and sorrow, not as the tender nurse of his infancy, but as the arch-tempter who had perilled his soul, and would do so again if she could. He fled, without caring whither, wishing that he could fly from all the world, but most of all from himself.





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE PENITENT THIEF.

**W**HERE the fields descended into a dingle which skirted the high road, Robert slackened his pace, for he felt the necessity of some definite plan of action. Sufficient proofs of felonious intention had been left by him in Lady Adela's chamber to convict him of crimes which he now would die rather than carry into effect; enough were there of proofs to condemn him, by the laws of his country, to transportation for life. By this time (in all probability) the hue-and-cry had been raised, and he durst not venture into the high road. He followed its line, however, with caution, until he came opposite the church; there he remained for a while, and sweet recollections of his wife and child stole over him, softening his heart, mellowing his better purposes, and insensibly winning his thoughts from the bitter present, and shaping them into a brighter future. How often had Martha tried to lead him back to his religious duties! how often had he carelessly said that he would go when Easter came round! He told her so, partly that he might get rid of the subject, and partly that he

might see the tear of mingled tenderness and joy that stood in her eyes, though all the while he never meant what he said.

Thus was he musing, when he heard the voice of a child. It was the first human voice he had heard that morning, and well did he recognise its tone for that of his own little girl, though the distance was too great as yet to distinguish her prattle. He bent beneath the hedge on the road-side, and soon he perceived Martha walking slowly along, going with her jug in her hand, as usual, to farmer Hobbs for new milk, at the milking-time, while Elizabeth danced gaily before her in pursuit of a butterfly. On approaching the church, they both stood and looked towards it.

The doors were not yet opened: Martha walked on, but Elizabeth quitted her chase, and took hold of her mother's apron. "Do not go by, mother," said she, beseechingly; "let us say a little prayer here for father;" and she led her mother to a little image of our Lady which filled a niche in the exterior wall, within a stone's throw of the spot where Robert was hidden.

He heard the prayer of his wife and child, and saw, when it was ended, the confident smiling face with which the little one looked up, saying, "All right now, mother; don't cry any more. Our blessed Lady knows 'Lisbeth's voice, and always hears her when she says her prayers. Father is sure to be safe; he will come home presently;" and she ran again to look for her butterfly.

They had prayed for him, and he had prayed too; his obedient hand, no longer fettered by the horrors of remorse, followed the sweet impulse of

his will; it owned the power of the Blessed Trinity, while it tokened the mystery of redemption; and as it did so, Robert uttered the words, "*Ave, spes mea!*"

Father Berrington had been summoned during the night to a sick-bed at many miles distance, and after a long ride over rough hilly roads, approached his home, not sorry to have the prospect of two hours' sleep in his arm-chair before it would be time to go to the church.

He had led his horse into the stable, and had reached his own hall-door, when a haggard-looking man in a smock-frock laid his hand on his arm, saying, "Sir, I wish to speak with you."

"After Mass, Robert," said Father Berrington, who recognised the voice of the well-known poacher Robert Perkins, and who anticipated nothing more from the interview than a newly patched-up begging-story in behalf of his mother.

"It won't do after Mass, sir," said Robert; "it must be now."

"Well, make haste then; what do you want? I have had very little rest, and I want an hour's sleep before Mass. What do you want?"

"Oh, sir," said Robert, "what is your want of rest to mine? For God's sake, don't send me away till I have made my peace with Him. They are hunting for me now. After Mass I may be in gaol. Now, sir, hear me now, as you value a living soul!"

Father Berrington turned and looked him in the face, and without saying another word, conducted him to a side-door leading into the sacristy of the church, and beckoned him to enter. "Here

you are safe," he said; "I will return to you in a few minutes. Let no care for the present divert your thoughts from their great task. Here is the shelter for the sinner, his hiding-place in the rock. Think of nothing but how to make all right between God and your conscience. No one will ever come here to look for you."





## CHAPTER X.

### A DISCOVERY.

**F**or all the household at the Hall, Adela de Vaux was the earliest riser. She never required assistance at her morning toilet; nor did she ever, even in the worst weather, order the carriage to convey her to Mass, but contented herself with such protection from rough weather as could be afforded by clogs, cloak, and umbrella.

But what need had she to go at all to the church at half-past seven in the morning, when her father's chaplain said Mass at the Hall at half-past nine? Was not this zeal without discretion? No, it was simple love that led her there. As children run, on rising, to their father's chamber to ask his blessing, and each little one contends with the other to obtain his first caress; as the infant when it first awakes turns instinctively to its mother's breast for its morning nourishment,—so did she hasten to approach the tabernacle of her Lord, to receive from His hands the food, the blessing, the greeting of each day. The sound of the human voice, when she returned to the world, could cause but little distraction to one who had

been listening inwardly to the secret whisperings of the Spouse of her soul. The vain flatteries of that world would have but little worth in the estimation of her who had just been admitted to worship with angels at the very footstool of an incarnate God. Satiated with that heavenly manna containing all sweetness, her soul would look well-nigh with loathing on the rich banquet of earthly pleasures which surrounded her; while the trials and sorrows of life would prove but a light burden to one who was fortified with that ‘bread of the strong,’ that super-substantial bread which it was her privilege almost daily to receive.

To return, however, to our history; for Adela, whom by anticipation we have taken to Mass, is in reality only just awake.

Great was the astonishment of our heroine, on entering her chamber, to see such evident proofs that it had been invaded in the night by robbers. She looked hastily around, and one glance at the open window, with the ladder beneath, assured her that the intruders were gone as they came, and that there was now nothing to fear beyond the loss of the jewels. Was her first impulse to ring the bell and alarm the house? No; it was to thank almighty God for preservation from danger during the night; and she knelt down on the same spot which, not half an hour since, had been pressed by the knees of the unhappy Robert; and here a fresh cause of astonishment meets her eye.

The canvas bag, with its rich contents, filled yet abandoned, lies before her; the pistols are on the ground; the lantern is almost burnt out—

it was that coarse suffocating smell which had awakened her; but see! the reliquary, which she had carefully deposited in its usual place, lies there before her; and the covering of her little altar, with its lace border, is wet and soiled, as though some tearful and fevered brow had rested upon it. The truth, as by a sudden intuition, dawns upon her quick and gentle spirit. Now she knows; this explains all. It is no matter of wonder to her that the grace of God has loved to surprise a sinner midway in his career; such things she knows are of daily occurrence. She knows too, right well, that in that relic of the holy Cross there resides a power not merely symbolical but actual, and without doubt it has cast its holy light through the shadow of some poor creature's soul; for she perceives that the lantern has been burning for hours, while the altar-covering is still moist. Reverently and fervently she thanked almighty God, whilst a tear of holy joy mingled with those so lately shed of holy sorrow; and she rejoiced with the angels in heaven over the sinner then doing penance, praying that, whoever it was, he might obtain the grace of final perseverance.

Adela's first care was to restore the room to the exact state in which it was when Percival retired for the night. She put out of sight and locked away every object which curious eyes would have considered proofs of guilt, but which she looked upon as trophies of victory—the victory of the Cross!

Her next care was to go to Mass, and to ask Father Berrington to offer up the holy Sacrifice that day for her intention; and when she received the reply that his intention was already promised to

another, she little suspected that that other was the intruder of the night before, and that their intentions were the same. He also asked her to give him a few minutes after Mass, as he had something to say to her before she returned to the Hall.

As she waited in Father Berrington's study when the Mass was ended, she resolved to tell him of her extraordinary adventure, and to ask him whether she had come to a reasonable conclusion and had acted with prudence, and whether it would be advisable to speak of the matter to her father. How was she surprised when, on his first entrance, the good priest, with a face full of happiness, congratulated her upon her last night's conquests! She was puzzled: was he alluding to the ball at Kennicourt, which she had really quite forgotten? No, not he; he cared about as little as herself for such matters. He congratulated her upon the easy way she took of converting a sinner, "not by hard work, such as we poor apostolic missionaries have to go through, but by going comfortably to sleep with good dispositions, leaving the window open and a relic in the room."

"Yes, my child," continued Father Berrington, "our Lord is not idle while we sleep: a great work was achieved last night. I am charged with some messages for you; but tell me first, I pray you, what measures have been taken in pursuit of the robber who last night entered your chamber, and whether either yourself or your father discovered any clue which might lead you to suspect who the culprits were?"

"None," she replied. "I saw traces of only

one individual; and as it was evident to me that he had purposely abandoned his design, I saw no occasion to give any alarm, but carefully hid all traces of him until I should learn from you what was best to be done. In the mean time," continued she smiling, "I owe him for one dark lantern, one pair of pistols, and one dirty bag, which are worth more in my eyes than all the Shumsheepore diamonds, and which you must pay for in my behalf by offering up the holy Sacrifice as soon as you are able for the penitent sinner."

"I have done so this morning," replied the priest. He then related, as Robert had requested him to do, many of the circumstances with which we are already acquainted, adding his entreaty for Lady Adela's forgiveness, and his solemn assurance that a secret which he had discovered, whilst examining the contents of a certain drawer, should be kept perfectly sacred by him.

"How thankful I am," said Adela, "that in the first hurry of the moment I did not instinctively touch the bell! What a subject of gratitude to Heaven is it, to think that he may now return home to his wife and family an altered man, yet free from disgrace! We must give him employment at once at the Hall, and afford him the means of pursuing an honest calling."

Father Berrington shook his head. "No," said he, "Robert has made a resolution not to return home; here he is firm, and I believe him to be right. What you have just proposed I anticipated as a probability, and put the case before him; but he would not listen to it for a moment. He sobs like a child at the very mention of his wife's name

and that of his little girl; yet he is determined not to see them again until he has an honest home to shelter them, and a lawful occupation by which to maintain them; and his only answer is the cry, ‘Don’t tempt me, sir, don’t tempt me.’”

“Why not here?” pursued Adela.

“Because he dares not trust himself near the occasions of sin; justly saying, ‘If they overcame me when I was strong, how much more likely are they to do so now that I am weakened by living so long in habits of wickedness!’ He does not much fear his companions in poaching and robbery,—for these he has always led rather than followed; but the two great temptations from which he desires to fly are his whisky-bottle and his mother.”

“His mother! Is it possible?”

“Yes, Grumbling Molly Perkins, whom he begs me to place under the special care and protection, not of your purse, for she is not an object of real charity—nor of your time and attendance, for her daughter-in-law Martha is exemplary in her duties towards the cross-grained old woman—but of your prayers. He begs you to convert her; and I wish you joy of your task. Without a miracle, it is likely to be a long, if not a hopeless one.”

“Tell him,” said Adela, “that I accept the holy charge with joy and with thanks; and that I will never despair and never cease praying for her, however little fruit I may see; for I know very well that we must not think no good is done by our prayers because our impatience is not always

gratified by seeing them answered just at the time and in the manner that we expect."

"Far from it, indeed," answered Father Berrington. "No prayers are ever lost; that is a great consolation for many a weary soul."

"Where is Robert?" said Adela; "and what are his plans?"

"There is a saying," replied Father Berrington, "that he who hides is the best finder; and I can only say, upon the strength of this proverb, that three taps of the knuckle upon a certain door would bring Robert bodily into your presence; but he would not wish to see you, even were it desirable for him to quit at this moment his place of concealment. His plan is to walk after dusk as far as Avonport, whence he will take the steamer to Starmouth, and there he hopes to get a passage in some emigrant ship by going before the mast. He cares little to which colony he goes, so that he can work his way with a clear conscience, and the blessing of Heaven on his honest endeavours."

"But is it right for him to leave his poor wife? Could we not manage that she should go with him and share his fortunes?"

"I think it as well to let him take his own view of the subject. One of the strongest feelings now pervading him is the desire to show to his wife the sincerity of his conversion. It will be a great consolation to her, and to him a strong and constant motive to perseverance, to think that he is trying to atone, by self-renunciation, patient labour, and frugality, for so many years of a lawless and idle life; and that he is providing a home for

her, which, however poor it may be, she will not be ashamed to enter. ‘How do I know,’ he says, ‘what hardships and uncertainties I may have to endure first? If I were to see her suffering them too, it would go hard with me, and perhaps I might be tempted to rob for her and Elizabeth, when I would have starved rather had it been only myself. Martha can earn a livelihood here; but of what avail would be her fine needlework and her clear-starching in the backwoods or the swamps of some far-off colony?’”

“Tell him, then,” said Adela, “that I will do my best to comfort his wife and keep up her courage until he is able to send for her, and that he shall have a free passage and outfit, with necessary tools, either to America, Australia, or New Zealand, where, with care and industry, he may be able in a couple of years to have his wife out;—and ask him to remember me in his prayers.”

“That is well,” said the good father. “Many a penitent sinner might be prevented from relapsing, had he only the means of quitting his old exterior together with his old interior, and of beginning anew in both at once. But see, time is wearing on apace. Your father will be soon looking out for the presiding genius of his breakfast-table: God bless you, my child!”





## CHAPTER XI.

### TRANSFORMATIONS.

**N**EARLY five years have elapsed since the close of our last chapter, and the history of at least one of our heroines draws to its inevitable close. Grumbling Molly Perkins lies on her death-bed. A second attack of paralysis has deprived her of the use of her limbs, and impaired without destroying the powers of her mind. Her memory, insufficient now to retain from hour to hour events passing before her in the present, recurs frequently, and at times vividly, to those of years gone by. The past is confounded with the present,—a sure warning that time will soon be no more; but where is the future?

She mistakes one person for another, and makes even more confusion in names than in the things of which they are the sign; but changed as she is in many ways, and weakened in body and mind, in one respect she seems stronger than ever, in one respect her malady has kept her where it found her. Alas that it should be so! the captious, ungrateful temper aggravates the restlessness

that accompanies her disease, and vents itself in reproaches on those two good nuns who have for weeks nursed her day and night, performing for her every office which proud human nature when erect calls disgusting, but which poor human nature when prostrate will most surely need one day or other. To them the task is holy and dear; nor do they ever weary in their care, replying only by prayers and sweet words of consolation to all her ungrateful murmurs. Nor is this their chief cause of anxiety for Molly. In another respect, still more grievous, she remains as she was. The ruling passion, strong in death, survives when all that it could feed upon seems to have decayed. What does she want now with that oak-chest and its contents, that her palsied tongue wastes so many of the few moments still left in the endeavour to make her wishes intelligible? Is it there? She is sure some one has moved it. Let her be raised in the bed, to see that no one has taken it away. Where is the key? They are always taking it from under her pillow; she is sure it was there just now. "Martha must have taken it away. Where is Martha? It is strange she stays out so long."

Yes, where is Martha?

Martha is in the far West, milking her cows and managing her dairy. Elizabeth, though only ten years old, is a clever little farm-servant, singing at her work; and both look as happy as the day is long.

"Martha, where have you put the key?" said Molly again. "Who is that? Are you Martha?"

"No, I am not Martha. Do not you remember

the day when we met the coach, and Martha went away? Martha has gone to America, you know," said a quiet voice from the bedside.

"Then she has taken the key with her."

"No, no, Molly dear; nobody has taken your key. See, here it is under your pillow all the while, quite safe. Sister Rose will hang it up. There, now you need not trouble yourself any more about it; we will see that no one takes it away."

"How do I know that?" said Molly, as she relapsed into stupor.

"Are you Martha?" said again the poor invalid, who had already forgotten the often-repeated answer to her question.

"No, not Martha; Martha is gone to America. I am Sister Catharine; you know me now, don't you, dear Molly?" said she, as she wiped the clammy brow of the sufferer.

"Oh, yes, I remember it now. Raise me up, I am choking."

The nun obeyed, and sustained the helpless weight in her arms until they ached; while Molly, between the intervals of her coughing fits, uttered inarticulate words of impatience and reproach, saying that they hurt her, they did it on purpose; she wished they would go away, and send Robert to her. At length, though much exhausted, she had an interval of comparative ease; and one of the sisters skilfully arranged her pillows, while the other laid her gently back upon them, keeping her arm under, that she might be ready to raise or lower the helpless head, according to the peevish caprice of the invalid.

"Are you easier now?" gently inquired Sister Rose.

"Yes, but no thanks to you; you never do anything right."

"Now that you are nicely settled," said Sister Catharine, "we are going to say some prayers. You will try to join us in them, won't you, dear Molly?"

"No, not now; I am too tired. I will say some to-morrow: it is getting late now, it is almost dark. There will be more time to think about it to-morrow."

Tears stood in the eyes of the good nun. "O Molly," said she, "do not let us put it off till to-morrow. You are very, very ill; but even if it were not so, none of us are sure of an hour, still less of a morrow. Don't you remember," said she softly, after a short silence, "don't you remember, Molly, that you promised me this morning you would see Father Berrington? I have sent for him, and he will be here very soon. Let us say some little prayers before he comes."

"Let him come to-morrow," repeated the old woman. "I promised Martha to see him before I died; but I am not so bad as that yet. Perhaps I will see him to-morrow; but I won't see him now, I tell you."

The two sisters exchanged a glance, and understood one another; that glance said, "Let us pray all the more fervently for her, since she refuses to pray for herself;" and kneeling by the bedside, they read aloud the prayers suited to her condition, and the preparation for death.

Father Berrington entered, and motioned them

to continue, kneeling down himself also. He had not come alone; he was accompanied by a tall, manly-looking farmer, young in figure and active in proportions, but wearing in his face tokens of many a struggle in the battle of life. He too knelt, and gazed with strange emotion on the dying form before him: he gazed unobserved; for her eyes were closed, and she had not noticed any new arrival. After the lapse of a few minutes the stranger rose quietly, and went into the outer room; and the sound of repressed sobs that fell at intervals distinctly on the ear, told that he could no longer master the irresistible power of grief.

"Has she shown any sense of her awful situation?" asked the priest. "Was she anxious for my arrival?"

Sister Catharine shook her head mournfully. "She *consented* this morning to see you," said she, "but is now anxious to defer it till to-morrow; nor will she believe she is so near death."

Father Berrington withdrew to join the stranger in the outer room, and beckoned to Sister Catharine to follow him. She did so, and he led the stranger to meet her. "Do not despair, Robert," said he. "Lady Adela has kept her promise, and has prayed daily for your poor mother; nor, late as it is in the day, does she even now doubt the power of fervent and persevering prayer. Here she is, or rather here she was; for two years have passed since Lady Adela died to the world, and rose again to live for our Lord and His poor as Sister Catharine. Go in now, Robert, to your mother's bedside, and continue the work the progress of which we will not doubt, though we may not be permitted to see it.

Have no fear that your sudden presence will agitate her; it is perhaps well for her now that time present has sunk already under the feet of death; she will think she saw you but yesterday, and you will have to deal only with the past and the future. Should you succeed in your endeavours to rouse her senses and awaken her conscience, call me, and the Church will finish the work."

Robert knelt for a blessing upon his hard task, and re-entered the chamber of death alone.

What passed between the mother and son we will not inquire. Suffice it to say that, after some lapse of time, Robert returned, pale but tranquil in countenance, and addressing Father Berrington said, "Sir, she desires to see you. God above all be blessed for ever!"

\*     \*     \*     \*     \*

Reader, let us not despair even for such as Molly, though we cannot but tremble for her; for while we firmly believe that the infinite mercy of God extends an offer of pardon to the last, and that the grace of a true repentance has been wonderfully vouchsafed to the most hardened sinners, we cannot but fear for those who refuse to quit their fast hold on this world until, in its rottenness, it crumbles away to dust with themselves. Charity not only believes and loves, but hopeth all things.

Before I conclude this little history, the reader would perhaps wish to know what became of the widow Hervey and her family, of whom I presented a slight sketch, as a contrast to the more immediate subject of our narrative, poor Grumbling Molly. The children were well provided for by the second wife of Lord Codlington, who about

four years since married again, and happily made a good choice. She took Jem into her service as page; and sent Mary to the puns' school, with a promise of a place at the Hall as soon as she was old enough. As for Jane, you have already been introduced to her in the character of Sister Rose.



**FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR;**

**OR,**

**Play and Earnest.**





# FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR;

OR,

## Play and Earnest.

---

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

HELEN, *ten years old.*

OSWALD, *nine ditto.*

AGNES, *seven ditto.*

FATHER DOMINIC.

The Gardener, Miller, &c.

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### SCENE I.

*A mill-stream, with a weir, down which the water rushes rapidly towards the mill. Agnes crosses a little bridge, listens, and then searches for a while among the sedges on the bank. At length she utters an exclamation of joy, and at the same moment a beautiful bantam hen rushes out, clucking.*

*Agnes.* Five eggs, and all my own! One each, for papa, mama, Helen, Oswald, and myself! Yet, no; poor old Kitty Oliver shall have this one, and I will boil it for her in her little tin saucepan. O sly Bantam, naughty Bruyère, to make

your nest in such an out-of-the-way place! Had I not been up so very early this morning, and heard your "Cluck, cluck!" you would have cheated us all.

*Helen and Oswald call, Agnes! Agnes!*

*Agnes.* They are coming this way, and calling me. I will not tell them of my good fortune until breakfast-time, and then it will be such a pleasant surprise. They will all wonder so to see Bruyère's eggs, but they will never guess where she had hidden them.

*Enter HELEN and OSWALD. Agnes hastily gathers up her apron with the eggs.*

*Oswald.* Agnes, we want you. We have invented a new game; and while we are planning all the rules and the meeting-places, and so on, you must gather some sedges for us.

*Agnes.* What can you want with sedges?

*Oswald.* What is that to you? You will know by and by when play-time comes; so lose no time, if you please, but do as you are bid.

*Agnes.* In a minute. Just let me run to the house and back. I will fly as fast as a bird.

*Oswald.* Stuff and nonsense! Who can wait for you? Breakfast will be ready in a quarter of an hour, and we have invented a new game, I tell you; so go and gather sedges.

*Agnes [imploringly].* O Oswald, pray let me take what I have in my apron to the house. It is a secret; you shall know it presently, but let me go.

*Oswald.* I know what it is, by the way you are holding up your apron. You have been gathering some flowers for the altar, and wish to make a

mystery of it; but there would have been plenty of time before four o'clock to gather them, so you are a great simpleton to do it so early.

*Agnes [aside].* The eggs at breakfast will set him right in that particular, so I will say no more now, but run for it.

*She turns quickly, and runs as fast as she can. OSWALD pursues, overtakes, roughly seizes her apron, and breaks all the eggs. Agnes bursts into tears.*

*Helen.* O Oswald, what have you done? Those must be Bruyère's eggs, that Agnes has been hunting for for more than a week!

*Oswald.* Then why did she not say so at once? I suppose she was afraid I should want one of them for my breakfast. Selfish little animal!

*AGNES sobs violently, but says nothing.*

*Helen.* Come, come, Oswald, do not be unfair to Agnes. She is a fretful little thing, with plenty of faults, as well as some of her neighbours, but she is not a greedy child.

*AGNES smiles, and looks gratefully at HELEN.*

*Oswald.* In that case it is a pity certainly for us that the eggs are broken, and a greater pity to cry about the matter. *He sings:*

“Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,  
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall;  
Not all the king's horses nor all the king's men  
Could set Humpty Dumpty up again.”

*Agnes [laughing].* That is very true, Oswald, dear; so we will think no more of our Humpty Dumpty's misfortunes.

*he runs to the brook, and begins to gather sedges.*

*Oswald.* By the way, those sedges are not quite the thing. Bring me the tallest flags and bulrushes you can find: pull them up close to the root. Every one must be as tall as yourself.

*Agnes.* They are very hard to break off; I am afraid they will cut my hands.

*Oswald.* Oh, that is a trifle. You must pull the harder; and when you have finished, lay them in a bundle at the door of the summer-house, that when the recreation-hour comes, we may begin without loss of time.

*Agnes.* I wonder what the play is to be.

*Helen.* I will tell you all about it at breakfast-time.

*Oswald.* And remember, that if you cry at every word that is spoken, and if you complain when the flags cut your hands, you will never make one in our game. None but the very bravest of the brave can learn to play with us at that.

*Exeunt HELEN and OSWALD; manet AGNES, who gathers flags and bulrushes, and carries them to the summer-house. She performs her task with much perseverance and patience, and never looks at her bleeding hands, until the breakfast-bell is heard.*

*Agnes.* There is the bell for breakfast, and I have not gathered my flowers, though I thought of them the last thing at night and the first thing in the morning. Well, well; patience was my virtue for yesterday's practice, and it certainly was not much tried: I must keep it until after breakfast, and then choose another for to-day.

*She dips her hands into the stream to wash them, lays her bundle at the door of the summer-house, and trips gaily homeward.*



## SCENE II.

*A flower-garden. Enter the three children.*

*Agnes.* Oh, yes, it will be lovely! To walk in procession and sing the litanies with flags in our hands to look like palms! Thank you again and again, dear Helen, for inventing such a sweet play.

*Oswald.* It was not Helen who invented it; it was I.

*Helen.* For shame, Oswald; how can you say so!

*Oswald.* Well, though you may have *thought* of it first, I put your thought into shape for you.

*Agnes.* Thank you, then, dear Oswald.

*Oswald* [to *Agnes*]. Now, mind, we only allow you a quarter of an hour to gather your flowers; and the very minute I whistle, you must come and join us in the forum.

*Agnes.* The forum? What is that?

*Oswald.* Why the grass-plot, to be sure, stupid. Do you not remember that the summer-house is the temple of Jupiter, where the martyrs are to refuse to offer sacrifice; and that the weather-cock is the Roman eagle, and the grass-plot is—

*Agnes.* Oh, yes, I remember all about it now! I promise to join you when you whistle for me in a quarter of an hour. [*Exeunt Helen and Oswald.*

*Agnes [while putting on her garden-apron and gloves, and taking out her flower-shears]. Oh, happy day, happy day! To dress our Lady's altar with my own roses, all my own! Thirteen white ones that I counted yesterday, with ever so many buds, and twenty-five red ones; and then the moss-rose tree, that seems to have come out on purpose for to-day, it is so full of buds! How beautiful they will look! Our blessed Lady shall have them all —every one; I would not give one to any body else to-day for the world—unless, perhaps,—[she pauses a moment, and then, clapping her hands together, adds with a happy smile and upward glance]* no, not even to Father Dominic. This is far better than even our new play; this is happiness, while that is only pleasure [*she looks thoughtful, and a cloud comes over her countenance*].

**FATHER DOMINIC** is seen approaching with his breviary in his hand.

*Agnes [still musing]. There is Father Dominic. I would ask him, only he is saying his office.*

**FATHER DOMINIC** crosses the path, and, without speaking, holds out his finger, which AGNES takes, looking up in his face, and walking beside him for a few minutes in silence.

*Father D. [shuts his book and smiles gently at Agnes]. Well, my child, what is it you are wishing to say to me?*

*Agnes [aside]. How is it he knows so well what I have in my thoughts? [aloud] Father, is there any harm in playing at martyrs?*

*Father D. You must first explain to me a little what sort of a game that is.*

*Agnes.* We are to pretend that we are some of the holy saints who suffered martyrdom under the Emperor Diocletian. Oswald is to be the pagan tyrant; the summer-house is to be the Roman temple, where Helen and myself are to refuse to offer sacrifice to Jupiter; and then we are to walk to prison and to death singing the litanies, with make-believe palms in our hands.

*Father D.* And you wish to know?—

*Agnes.* Whether the sufferings of the saints is not too holy a subject to be turned into play?

*Father D.* Tell me, my child, which is the most holy occupation that children can have?

*Agnes* [*after thinking awhile*]. Father, you have told me that, with simplicity and obedience, every occupation is holy to a little child; so that play in play-time is as holy as study in school-time, or even as meditation itself.

*Father D.* And what is it that sanctifies your meditation, your work, and your play, so as to make them equally acceptable to our Lord?

*Agnes.* The constant remembrance of His adorable presence.

*Father D.* Go, my child, to your play. For my part, I think it the prettiest I have heard of for many a long day, and I should like to be a little child like you for a while to join in it. Though your palms are make-believe ones, your litanies are real, and whenever you sing them your angel guardian joins his voice with yours. Who knows but that our Lord, when He sees little children so amusing themselves with good dispositions, may bestow on them in reality the spirit of martyrdom?

*Agnes.* Do people need the spirit of martyrdom

now, when there are no longer any heathen emperors? What is the spirit of martyrdom, Father?

*Father D.* [sighing]. Yes, my dear child, we want it still, and shall do so to the end of the world; but if you ask me what it is, I answer it is a gift from heaven, to be obtained, like all other perfect gifts, by asking for it. Let this be the virtue you choose for to-day; pray for it, my dear child, and it will be given to you both to know and to practise it, whether in play-time or at any other time, should the occasion be given when you need it; and this may be sooner than you think.

*Agnes.* O Father, I am such a coward! I am afraid of every thing and every body; and if ever so slightly hurt, can scarcely refrain from tears. Oswald says he would make the best martyr that ever was, for he is so brave that he does not mind pain in the least, and never cries at all. Pray for me, that I may be as brave as Oswald, before I am ever required to suffer, lest I should deny my Lord: that would be terrible!

*A whistle is heard.*

*Agnes.* Oh, listen! they are calling me already. What shall I do? what shall I do?

*Oswald whistles again, and Helen calls,* Agnes! Agnes! we are waiting.

*Agnes* [wringing her hands]. What must I do? I promised to go when they called, and I have not gathered my flowers.

*Father D.* Keep your promise, my child, at all risks: bear a disappointment rather than break a promise.

*Agnes.* But there are two promises, Father; and

one of them must be broken. I had promised our Blessed Lady every rose in my garden for this feast, and that I would say a *Memorare* before they were gathered; and now the only time I had has slipped by. This was my first promise and my best; I cannot break it.

*They call, impatiently, Agnes! Agnes!*

*Father D.* Give me your basket, my child. Offer to our Lord every little good action as a flower for the altar. I will gather these flowers for you, and leave them in the summer-house; while you go down the lawn, say the *Memorare*, and I will say it at the same time. Will that do?

*AGNES looks gratefully at FATHER DOMINIC, kisses his hand, and walks quietly down the lawn, saying her little prayer with recollection. When it is ended, she runs towards the summer-house, clapping her hands with delight.*





### SCENE III.

*The three children are seen coming out of the summer-house. OSWALD is dressed as a Roman lictor, bearing in his hand an axe tied in a bundle of rods. HELEN and AGNES have long white veils, and each wears a passion-flower in her bosom.*

*Oswald [fiercely].* Come on, wretches, and suffer the punishment which Cæsar so justly awards to your crimes. Thrice have you impiously refused to sacrifice, and thrice shall you be beaten with these rods before the axe closes your miserable and detestable lives. In the mean time, thrice shall you be driven through the city and round its boundaries, that every Roman may behold your ignominy, and may tremble at your fate.

*He drives them before him for some time, and then stops opposite the summer-house.*

*Oswald to Agnes.* Maiden, your tender years inspire me with some compassion for your folly: only bow as you pass that standard, and I will intercede for you with the emperor.

*AGNES walks erect past the summer-house.*

*Oswald.* Wilt thou not bend?

*Agnes.* No.

*Helen [pushing her].* You do not do it properly.

Make a speech, cannot you? Plain "no" sounds so stupid.

*Agnes.* I do not know what else to say.

*Helen.* You ought to make a grand speech, to defy the lictor, and abuse the emperor and the gods of Rome. You shall hear by and by how *I* will do it.

*Oswald [threatening with his rod].* Once for all, wilt thou bow to the standard of Rome, to the royal bird of Jupiter?

*Agnes.* Never!

*Oswald.* Here then will I teach thee what it is to be obstinate. [*He strikes her somewhat harder than he intended.*]

*The Angel guardian of AGNES approaches and whispers to her frequently during this scene and the rest of the drama. The words of the Angel seem to AGNES thoughts, for she does not see the Angel, but she knows he is near, and speaks to him also in thoughts.*

*Angel.* Courage, Agnes. A flower for the altar!

*Oswald to Helen.* To thee also is mercy for the last time offered. Disgrace not a name held in honour throughout the world, that of a Roman matron; nor afford a pretence to thy children to desert the holy temples, where their ancestors worshipped, and forsake the protecting gods of their hearths and homes.

*Helen.* Your gods are but demons; and had they been mortals, they would have been, by your own account of them, a disgrace to humanity. Your temples are dens of the vilest wickedness; your emperor is a base tyrant, and deserves himself to be torn by the beasts of the circus. I defy

him and you, together with all the tortures you can inflict, and desire to be led to martyrdom.

*Agnes [aside].* Oh, how good Helen is! how noble she looks! I should never be able to say all that.

*Oswald to Helen.* So thou protest, dost thou? By the emperor's command, thus will I silence thee. [*He gives her a blow with the rod.*]

*Helen [angrily].* Don't, Oswald! You hurt me.

*Oswald.* Hurt you? that is impossible. I hit Agnes much harder, and she only smiled. I did not hurt you, I am sure.

*Helen.* You did, Oswald; and I will not play with you if you do it again.

*Oswald.* And I will not play with you if you call me Oswald; you are breaking the rules of the game, to call me Oswald instead of lictor.

*They seem about to quarrel violently.*

*Angel to Agnes.* Make peace between them; that will be a flower for the altar.

*Agnes.* Dear Oswald, I think you must have hurt Helen a little more than you intended; for see, there is a blue mark on her arm. Had we not better leave off this part of the game? Suppose the lictor should suddenly be converted; and then we can all be Christians going together to martyrdom, carrying our palms and singing our hymns.

*Helen.* With all my heart.

*Oswald.* Very well, I am ready; and for a beginning I will kick down the altar of Jupiter, and throw away my fasces. [*Exeunt.*]



## SCENE IV.

*The children are walking in procession, bearing their mock palms. HELEN and AGNES have their hands bound. They sing, "Ave maris Stella." A group of little villagers stand in the road, looking through the gate of the garden, to listen and to watch them as they pass.*

*1st Child.* Well, if that ain't beautiful! I wonder whether we could play at that, or whether it could be only for gentlefolks.

*2d Child.* Why shouldn't us? If us can sing in the church, us has as good a right as they any how and any where.

*Angel to Agnes.* Love the poor, and welcome them every where.

*Agnes.* Perhaps this may be a flower for the altar.

*She runs to her mother, who is sitting reading on one of the garden-seats, and asks permission for the village children to join their procession. This being granted, AGNES tells the children where to find the bundle of palms, and again takes her place behind HELEN. They walk on, singing, "Virgo singularis, inter omnes mitis," &c. &c. KITTY OLIVER, who is weeding a flower-bed, looks up when she hears their voices, and calls to the Gardener.*

*Kitty.* John, John, come here and hearken. You have heard me tell about Miss Agnes' singing. Come and listen to it yourself, and you will say

with me that there is not one of them to be compared with her. Bless her little heart! she sings like an angel, as she is.

*AGNES, who hears this, blushes.*

*Agnes to her Angel guardian.* If it will be a flower for the altar to shun human praise, let me sing in my heart only, and do you sing for me.

*The Angel sings, and AGNES keeps silence.* They walk along the bank of the river, singing the Litany of Loretto, when the village children arrive, carrying their mock palms: they follow the procession, and join in the Litany.

*Oswald [turning sharply round].* Who is that roaring the *Ora pro nobis*, spoiling our singing?

*1st Child [slinking back].* 'Twasn't me, sir.

*2d Child [pulling his forelock, and scraping a rustic bow].* I humbly ax your pardon, sir.

*3d Child [grumbling].* I don't see what harm there is, when missis gave us leave.

*4th Child [sturdily].* Mother says that the day may come when the quality and the gentlefolks will be glad enough to have the prayers of the poor.

*Helen [with a patronising air].* And your mother said very right, my dear; so, since mama has given you permission, you may walk in our procession; only you must take care to keep at a respectful distance, and not to sing too loud.

*The village children fall back.*

*Angel to Agnes.* Our Lord so loved the poor, that He became one of them, and lived among them as His friends.

*Agnes.* Let my littleness be of itself an humble

flower for our Lord. I am unworthy to be the least among the poor, since He so loved them.

*She retires, and mingles with the village children. When the Litanies are ended, HELEN and OSWALD stand still, and the rest await their orders.*

*Helen.* I am tired of walking in procession and singing, are not you? What shall we do next?

*One of the village children advances with a basket of roses in his hand.*

*Child to Oswald.* If you please, sir, I found this in the summer-house, where Miss Agnes sent us for our flags and bulrushes; and thinking mayhap you wanted these roses to dress up for your procession, I made bold to bring them with me here.

*Oswald.* Oh, that is famous! We are now in the amphitheatre, awaiting the arrival of the Emperor Diocletian, who is anxious to witness the tortures of the Christian martyrs. Somebody must represent the Emperor Diocletian, and none can act that part so well as myself; because I am up in the Roman history, and understand Latin and all that. I will just go behind that arbutus to arrange my toga, and to throw away my palm; and then you, Charlie Baker, you will do for a trumpeter to announce my arrival; and all the rest, except Helen and Agnes, must cry, "Long live Cæsar! long live the immortal Diocletian!" and must strew these roses in my path when I arrive. This basket comes just in the right time.

*Agnes.* No, Oswald, no! Pray do not touch those roses; they were gathered from my own garden, and you know what for.

*Oswald.* If I choose to have them, I should like to see you prevent me! I will make you repent of it, if you try.

*Angel.* Courage to suffer for justice' sake is a flower worthy of the altar.

*Agnes.* Oswald, you shall not touch one of those flowers. They are neither yours nor mine: they were given to our blessed Lady, and she shall have them.

*Oswald [sarcastically].* Oh, ho! Agnes turned vixen, and daring to dictate to me: that is capital! It is very remarkable that I don't feel more frightened. Never was cooler in my life, ha, ha, ha! [*He holds the basket over his head, and laughs.*]

*Angel.* To bear affronts and mockery is a choice flower, and very dear to our Lord.

*Agnes [meekly].* Oswald, I forgive you from my heart; but pray give me those flowers.

*The poor children surround her.*

*Omnes.* Never mind, Miss Agnes, you shall have plenty of flowers for our Lady's altar; we will all go and gather the very best we have, and will be back again in ten minutes.

*They run in different directions to gather flowers for Agnes.*

*Oswald.* There! do you hear? you will have twice as many as these in ten minutes, so don't be bothering me any more, for I mean to have them, and have them I will.

*Angel to Agnes.* Zeal for the house of our Lord is beautiful and fragrant to Him.

*Agnes.* No, Oswald, no: you shall not even touch them. What is given to the Church is

already holy, and I will pray that you may not have *one* of them.

*Helen.* For shame, Oswald! What a coward you are to take advantage of a child like Agnes! Put down the basket this instant, or I will go and tell mama.

*Oswald [angrily].* Go along with you then, and tell tales, and see what you will get by them. There is no use in holding out your hands, Agnes; they are tied fast enough.

*He runs across the bridge pursued by HELEN.* When he has reached the other side, he throws the basket into the mill-stream, and laughs scornfully. Agnes bursts into tears.

*Angel.* Pray for Oswald.

*Agnes.* And do you also pray for him as I do.

*The basket is whirled round in the eddy until it is almost within reach.* AGNES seizes a long stick, and approaching the edge of the river tries to draw her prize to shore; she touches it, and seems on the eve of gaining her point, but her hands being bound, she is prevented from controlling her own movements or those of the stick: she loses her footing, and falls into the river. Her Angel guardian folds her close within his wings as she is carried by the stream out of sight, round a sudden bend of the river between the bridge and the mill.

*Oswald screams:* Oh, the mill! the mill! My God! let me not see it! let me not do it!—[*He covers his face with his hands, and throws himself on the ground in agony and terror.*]

*Helen [falling on her knees].* Mother of good counsel, pray for us! Refuge of sinners, pray for us! [*She turns to Oswald, takes hold of his arm, and speaks quietly but firmly.*] Oswald, we must

do what we can, and not despair of the goodness of Almighty God. Untie my hands. [Oswald obeys mechanically.] Now run as fast as you can to the mill; take the short cut by the lane. I see Dick the miller leaning over his gate; he will know whether any thing can be done. Go, and may God speed you, while I run for Father Dominic.

*HELEN flies away like lightning. OSWALD makes towards the lane, but can scarcely stagger along; his knees tremble, and he is obliged to catch at the branches of the hedge to keep himself from falling. DICK, the miller, perceives that something is wrong, and runs to meet him as quickly as his old legs will carry him.*





## SCENE V.

*The road from the village. FATHER DOMINIC and HELEN are hurrying along. The clock strikes.*

*Father Dominic* [thinking aloud]. One o'clock! All this must have happened a full hour ago; for the cottage where Helen found me is a good mile and a half from the bridge.—[To Helen.] I would not bid you cease to hope, my child, for with Almighty God all things are possible; but be prepared to submit in all things to His adorable will. Your little sister was ripe for heaven; and if our Lord desired to take her to Himself, we have no right to murmur if He refuses to work a miracle for our sakes merely, our selfish sakes!

*HELEN sobs heavily from time to time, and they walk on for some way without saying another word.*

*Helen.* Who is that coming across the field towards the road?

*Father D.* It is Dick the miller; he is hurrying towards us.

*Dick shouts:* Not that way, Father; to the house, to the house!

*He takes off his broad hat, and wipes his face, which is as pale as death, and quickly joins them.*

*Father D.* To the house, did you say?

*Dick.* Yes, Father; she is found and carried home.

*Father D.* [aside]. I dare not ask the particulars —I see how it is.

*Helen.* O tell me; is she dead?

*The Miller looks at her sorrowfully.*

*Helen.* O let me go on by myself: I cannot wait for you; I must go and comfort mama.

*Father D.* Go, my child; and may your heavenly Mother help you in your task. [*Exit Helen.*] Now, tell me, I pray you every particular. Who found her? Was life quite extinct when she was taken from the mill-wheel?

*Dick.* The mill-wheel! [*he shudders*] No, thank God, we were spared that trial! Her cheek is as smooth as a lily flower and as pale, and there is neither scratch nor stain on her little white limbs; and there she lies, with a smile on her face like an angel asleep.

*Father D.* God is indeed merciful in the midst of His judgments.

*Dick.* Here is how it was: when Master Oswald told me what had happened, away I ran at once to the mill to stop the machinery; and (God forgive my want of faith!) I said, "Of a certainty it is too late; nothing can hinder the course of a mill-stream, and we shall find her all torn and mangled among the wheels." No, sir, she had never reached the mill. Away I went up the river towards the bridge; and there, just in the bend, on the side next the mill, there she lay among the flags and sedges. The current must have carried her within reach of them, for she had caught hold of them

with the clutch of death ; and this it was that stopped her from being carried over the weir. She had so firm a hold of those flags that I was obliged to cut them off near the roots to disengage her ; and to see her lying there, with her hands bound, and the long leaves in them that they tell me she had been playing at martyrs with, and with that heavenly smile on her countenance ! I never should forget that sight if I were to live a hundred years, and a hundred more on the top of them.

*Father D.* That sight, Dick, will be remembered to all eternity in heaven. It is one worthy the attention of men and of angels.

*Dick.* Well, sir, and that was not all ; for close beside her, among the rushes, lay that basket of roses that I saw you gathering this morning out of her own little garden. They say that her last words were to give those roses to the blessed Virgin.

*Father D.* And Oswald—how does he bear it ?

*Dick.* Oh, sir, he is very quiet ; but still I think he is clean out of his senses, for he will have it that Miss Agnes is not dead. I carried her home in my arms, and sent my wife first to prepare madam for the sorrow that was coming upon her. As for Master Oswald, he had taken the basket and had gone on too. He walked along without even so much as lifting up his eyes ; but I saw him from time to time kissing the basket that he held in his hand, as if he was not worthy to carry it, until I lost sight of him altogether. I slackened my steps, sir, as I came near the house—for I had not the heart to think of the mother—and I was plotting in my head how I should behave, and what I

should say, when who should I see but madam herself coming out of the gate with the servants, and walking without hurry or agitation, as collected and calm as when she goes up the aisle of a Sunday morning. She comes up to me, and takes Miss Agnes into her arms, oh, so tenderly! and walks straight up the steps, and through the porch into the church, and there she laid her at the foot of the altar, and said the Salve Regina, in which we all joined. Master Oswald had been there before us, for the basket of flowers was on our Lady's altar; but he did not come near us. He had hidden himself in some corner when we came in, for I heard him sobbing. When we left the church I followed them home. Madam carried Miss Agnes herself upstairs, where every thing had been made ready to receive her; and when I came away, the mother and the old nurse were busy chafing the body, and using all the means possible to restore life, if such a thing were possible. When I came out of the room to go and meet you, sir, there was Master Oswald outside the door on his knees. He will not stir from that spot; but he tells every body who goes by that his sister is not dead, and that she will not die, because then he would be a murderer. But as to that—as to any chance of that!—I carried her home in my arms, and bless your heart alive, sir!—

*Here Dick shakes his grey head, and the tears trickle down his checks.*



## SCENE VI.

*A bedchamber. AGNES is lying pale and apparently lifeless on her little bed. Her Mother and HELEN, with the Nurse, are chafing her limbs and applying restoratives. No one speaks.*

*Enter FATHER DOMINIC.*

*Father D.* Sweet little lamb ! dear to our Lord ! Your prayer of to-day went straight up to heaven ; it was soon answered.

*He kneels beside the bed ; the others also kneel.* A pause.

*Father D. to the Mother.* Was there any thing like life ? Had you, have you, any hope that life is not quite extinct ?

*Mother.* I have fancied, from time to time, that there was a slight pulsation of the heart, but my own beats so strongly that I may easily be mistaken.

*FATHER DOMINIC places his hand on the child's heart, and bending his ear down listens attentively ; he then takes a glass from the table, and holds it to her mouth. The mother watches anxiously. He gives the glass to the mother.*

*Mother.* The glass is dimmed by her breath,—she lives !

*Father D.* No time must now be lost in giving her the last sacrament of the Church. Perhaps it

was for this great grace that this little spark of life was allowed to remain. You see she is perfectly insensible to all external things; she is evidently unconscious—her moments may be very few.

*Mother.* O Father, I will hope against hope! If our Lord has granted to a mother's prayer this little breath of life, how much more will He not bestow an answer to that sacrament which pleads for life in the very presence of death, and to which He has given a promise that it shall bring health to the sick, as well as forgiveness to the sinner.  
[*She kneels beside Agnes, and whispers in her ear.*] My child, Father Dominic is here, to give you the last sacrament of the Church. If you have any consciousness, say a little prayer.

*Angel whispers to Agnes:* Jesus, Mary, Joseph!





## SCENE VII.

*The same room, darkened. HELEN sits watching beside the bed, and from time to time peeps between the curtains.*

*Helen.* She still sleeps; and now she looks like herself again. How little did I think we should ever see again that pink bloom on her cheek, and those hands, which were so rigid but a few hours since, relaxed by sleep, and meekly crossed upon her bosom as usual. Oh, how delightful to sit here, if it were only to hear her breathe! even for that I could never be weary of thanking God. The last five hours seem only like so many minutes; and yet I have done nothing but sit here, and listen to the same breathing that I might have heard at any time for the last seven years. How little we think of the mercies every day bestowed upon us, just because we are never without them! The very reason that we should never be without gratitude to God! Let me offer up every breath of my life now, once for all, in grateful adoration. But see! she moves, she wakes; with her eyes still closed she makes the sign of the cross, and offers up her first thoughts to God.

*Agnes.* Is Oswald there?

*Helen.* No, sweetest, it is I. You shall not see

Oswald until you wish it yourself. But he is not going to tease you any more.

*Agnes.* Good morning, dear Helen. Give me a kiss, and then ask Oswald to come to me directly; but do not disturb mama, for she wants rest.

[*Exit Helen.*]

*Enter OSWALD.*

*Agnes.* Come hither, dear; I want to speak to you.

*OSWALD comes forward in tears, and buries his head in the counterpane as he kneels beside AGNES. AGNES puts her arm round him, and draws him near enough to whisper in his ear—*

I know all about it, dear; I know what you are thinking of.

*OSWALD beats his breast, but does not say a word.*

My poor Oswald! how much you have suffered! Would you do any thing I asked you now?

*OSWALD kisses her hand and sobs.*

You will. Well, then, promise me that, when at any time you think of yesterday and of all that happened to us, you will think of it this way: Once upon a time Almighty God, in His infinite mercy, preserved my little Agnes in a wonderful way, in order that she might love me and I love her, and both of us love Him a thousand times more than ever we did before, or ever could have done otherwise.

*Oswald.* I will.

*Agnes.* And when you cannot help reproaching yourself, you will not do it more unkindly than

you can help, but will say, "Out of this fault, with God's help, shall spring ten virtues?"

*Oswald.* I will.

*Agnes.* And now, dear Oswald, give me a drink. I am still very weak, but shall soon be well. If Helen comes in, tell her it is your turn to watch. There, put your hand under my cheek, that I may kiss it when I awake. That is nice; I can go to sleep again now. Good night, dear. How happy we shall all be, now, if Almighty God gives us the grace of perseverance to the end!





# BAD WORDS;

OR,

## The Poor Man's Child.



LONDON:

BURNS AND LAMBERT, 17 PORTMAN STREET.

READER, PARK STREET, BRISTOL.

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1853.

LONDON :  
**PRINTED BY LEVET, ROBSON, AND FRANKLYN,**  
Great New Street and Fetter Lane



## BAD WORDS;

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### CHAPTER I.

#### LITTLE MARY AND HER PARENTS.

**M**N a part of England noted for its fine soil and healthy air there lies a village which we will call Freshfield. A large tract of common-land surrounds this village, and deep in a valley close by stands an ancient church, which once was Catholic.

The sloping churchyard descends to the brink of a clear rapid river, and by this river there is a narrow road. The road leads for miles along the river's bank. The river is the pride of Freshfield, and the walk is a favourite one. It is a Sunday walk for all the neighbourhood, and is as good as a play-ground for all the village children.

The river was celebrated for its magnificent trout. When the season for fly-fishing came, gentlemen often arrived from a distance, and lodged in the village to enjoy the sport.

A young gentleman called Gervys came to Freshfield year after year. He was Mr. Gervys of Castle Gervys, a fine old place about thirty miles from Freshfield. He had neither father nor mother, but an aunt of his lived at Castle Gervys, and she was called Mrs. Wardour.

One lovely spring Mr. Gervys came, and Mrs. Wardour came with him. She had lost her husband and her only child, and wore deep mourning; and lately she had been ill, so that she looked both pale and sad. There was something very kind and pleasant about her. The people in the village used to smile and curtsey as they passed, not only because they knew Mr. Gervys, but because she looked so gentle.

After Mr. Gervys had lodged with his aunt in a cottage on the common for about a month, he went home. But he left his aunt behind; for the air had done her good, and she wished to stay longer.

Mrs. Wardour was very fond of the walk by the river side. There she would stroll for half a summer's day. Hour after hour, with a book in her hand, she would sit and walk by the river's brink.

Walking there one day, she came to an open space sprinkled with hawthorn trees still white with flower. Under a tree close to the path sat a little girl of not more than eight years old, neatly clothed and very pretty. When she saw Mrs.

Wardour she got up. Like most of the village children, she knew the lady's name. As she made a curtsy, a lapful of flowers dropped out of her apron to the ground.

The child had been arranging her flowers, putting all the stems together; now that she saw her work undone, her face grew red, and she gave a hasty stamp of vexation, saying something which Mrs. Wardour did not hear.

The lady saw the child's trouble; smiling affectionately she said, "Now let me help you to pick up these violets and primroses and wood anemones, and shew me what you want to do with them."

The child looked up in the lady's face, and immediately believed her to be kind and loving. They began to pick up the flowers together.

"What is your name?" said Mrs. Wardour.

"Mary."

"Do you go to Mr. Brown's school?"

"I don't go to school; we have not got a school here."

"Yes, there is the school by Mr. Brown's gate."

"It is wicked to go there," said little Mary very gravely, and holding up a bunch of white violets for Mrs. Wardour to look at.

"Of what religion are you?" said the lady, not knowing that she was asking one of the questions from the Catechism.

"I am a Christian," replied the child.

Mrs. Wardour felt puzzled. "Where do you go on Sundays?" she asked.

"Nowhere. Only now, in the summer, sometimes father borrows the miller's cart, and then

he takes me to church. But I am too small to walk with him and mother."

" And where is your church ?"

" At Farley," said Mary, still very busy with her flowers, and twisting some dry grass round the stems to form them into nosegays.

Mrs. Wardour thought that the parents of the child might be some sort of Dissenters. " What shall you do with those pretty bunches of flowers ?" she repeated, as Mary did not answer directly.

" This bunch is for St. Joseph, and this one for the blessed Virgin Mary, because it is quite white."

Mrs. Wardour knew in a moment that Mary was a Catholic. " I think that white nosegay would be prettier if it had some blue and red in it," she said.

" But then it would not be so like our Blessed Lady. My mother likes all white flowers for her, when she can get enough."

" And why? Does your mother tell you why?"

" When she puts them on our altar—"

" Your altar !" interrupted Mrs. Wardour ; " your altar !—where is that ?"

" In the closet at the foot of the great bed ; and we say our prayers there every night."

Mrs. Wardour looked at Mary as if she was the greatest wonder in the world. But Mary, who was accustomed to talk to her mother of holy things, spoke with the unsuspecting freedom of her age.

" What does your mother say when she puts the flowers on your altar ?"

" ' Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Mother conceived without sin, pray for us.' "

Mrs. Wardour asked Mary what her father was called.

"He is called George Thornton : he is a blacksmith. He lives near the mill. Mother's name is Dorcas. It is dinner-time. I am going home now."

All this was given by Mary in answer to questions asked by Mrs. Wardour.

The lady and the child followed the path together.

"You have not told me why white flowers are like the Virgin Mary," said Mrs. Wardour.

"Because they are pure and bright, and have no stain. Just so was her soul. She was perfect and pure, and fit to be the Mother of God."

"Who told you all this ? Did your mother tell you ?"

"She talks to me about it very often. But what I said to you is the same that I say to Father Clarke, when I shew him my rosary pictures."

"Rosary pictures !" The lady felt more and more surprised. "What are rosary pictures ?"

"What teaches about the rosary," Mary answered ; "don't you know ?" Mary seemed to learn for the first time that her companion was very ignorant. "Don't you know about the 'Nunciation ?" making a struggle over the long word. "And the angel has a lily-flower in his hand, and we have lily-flowers in our garden ; and Father Clarke told me about emblems—don't you know ?"

"I have no rosary pictures, so I don't quite understand you," said Mrs. Wardour.

They were now arrived at Mary's home.

" May I come in ?" asked Mrs. Wardour, as Mary opened the door and said,

" This is mother, please, ma'am."

Dorcas Thornton made Mrs. Wardour welcome. She gave her a chair, and hoped that her little girl had not been troublesome. " She has rather a free tongue sometimes," said Dorcas, as she took off Mary's bonnet. Then she put the child's curling hair in order, with something of a mother's pride in what was so very pretty, and said again, " She is rather free and forward sometimes."

Mrs. Wardour said that she liked to hear the child talk. She took the chair which Dorcas offered to her, and felt glad to rest for a time in the clean, bright, neatly furnished kitchen.

Dorcas was still at work, making Mary's hair tidy, and still talking to Mrs. Wardour, when by accident she caught her fingers in a long ringlet, and gave the child an instant's pain. Again Mrs. Wardour remarked the look which she had seen on Mary's face when the flowers dropped from her lap, and again quick words were gushing from her lips ; but the mother placed her hand on her child's mouth ; and the little creature, looking up into her face, saw such love and tenderness glowing there that she smiled through her tears, and kissed the hand half a dozen times which still pressed her lips. It was all done in a moment ; but Mrs. Wardour could not help thinking that there was no common love and fear in that mother's heart ; and she also thought that Mary was no common child.

" Now run to your father and tell him it is one

o'clock," said Dorcas. Little Mary ran away quickly ; she stopped at the door to make Mrs. Wardour a curtsy, and then exchanging one more sweet smile with her mother, she was gone.

" Yours is a very remarkable child, I think," said Mrs. Wardour.

" Well, ma'am, she is very clever, and rather beyond her years in thoughts and knowledge. But she has had no companions of her own age, no brothers and sisters ; and playing and talking with grown people is apt to make a child remarkable."

" You have taught her very well."

" O ma'am, she would have been taught better if we could have had a Catholic school and chapel here. I hope, however, that I have done my best for her."

" I did not know till to-day that there were any Catholics at Freshfield."

" We are the only Catholic family in the place."

" And how came you to settle so far away from the comforts of your religion ?"

" For a living, ma'am," said Dorcas. " George makes a good living here ; but it has its trials."

" Your child says you go to Mass at Farley. Did she mean Farley Park ?"

" Yes, ma'am ; Mrs. Travers', at Farley Park. She makes her chapel public. It is a good-sized chapel ; but there are many to fill it, and we already wish it was larger."

" Who goes there ? I know Mrs. Travers ; but her household would not fill it."

" The tenantry and their families, and the Catholics from the town of Farley, about two miles

off. You know Farley, perhaps ? There are plenty of Catholics there now. It's time they had a chapel of their own ; for unless poor people can bring up their children to follow their religion and live by it, how can they expect to keep them out of wickedness ?"

" Very true," replied Mrs. Wardour in a thoughtful voice. " But *you* teach your child without either school or chapel."

" Yes, but I have time : I am well off compared with many ; and I am able to teach, for I was well taught myself."

At that moment a man's voice was heard in the back kitchen, which could be entered by a back-door. It was a pleasant, cheerful voice, but rather loud and boisterous. Dorcas's face grew red. Mrs. Wardour rose to go. Dorcas opened the door between the rooms and said, " A lady, George."

" If that is your husband, I should like to see him," said Mrs. Wardour, with a smile. George came in. Mrs. Wardour smiled again ; she thought that she had never seen a pleasanter-looking man. He had just washed from his face the marks of his blacksmith's work, and he held little Mary by the hand, who looked up at him with delight.

" It's the lady who helped me with the flowers, father," she said.

George rubbed the black curling hair off his white forehead, made Mrs. Wardour a bow, and thanked her for noticing the child. " She's our only one, and very dear," he said.

Mrs. Wardour said again that she was a nice child. " You know where I lodge ; and if you will

let her come to see me, I think I could find a nice little book."

" Asking your pardon, ma'am," said George, "she must take no books but Catholic books. There's nothing true but the teaching of the one true Church of Christ ; every other sort of teaching is poison, and I would not give my child poison—no, not in the smallest of doses. You, ma'am, are not likely to give Mary Catholic books, and she must not read any thing else. I hope you will excuse my plain speaking."

" There is nothing to excuse, but much to admire in your plain speaking. If you value your religion as a thing given to you by God, you are quite right not to let any body meddle with it."

" And it does my heart good to hear any thing so sensible from a lady's lips," said George. " Why, ma'am, we have people, calling themselves ladies, who come to my house unasked, and say they *will* leave their Protestant books and tracts—' At your own risk, miss,' said I the other day. ' Oh, yes, at my own risk, and I'll call again for it next week'—' Save yourself the trouble,' said I, and put it into the fire before her face. And *you*, ma'am, won't think that I was wrong. You see, ma'am, I know my religion and I believe it. The greatest part of the Christian world is of my religion. My religion is known to be the only old religion. When I know that my religion comes straight down from our Lord's apostles, why should I leave it ? And as there's no older Christian religion than mine, I think it would be more modest for them to come here to *learn* than to *teach*."

Mrs. Wardour could not help smiling, for though

she was not a Catholic, she could see that George Thornton was talking common sense. Encouraged by the smile, George went on ; but he had only uttered a word or two when the thought of these interfering persons made him burst out with a few quick expressions, the exact meaning of which Mrs. Wardour did not catch ; for at that moment a small table by which Dorcas was standing fell down and made George jump, for it fell against his legs.

Mrs. Wardour saw that he was not hurt, only startled. "I may call again, I suppose, though I must not bring a book ?" she said.

"As often as you please, ma'am ; and we are much obliged—good morning." And so Mrs. Wardour went away.





## CHAPTER II.

### GOOD THOUGHTS.

HAT same evening Dorcas and George Thornton were sitting alone after little Mary was asleep in bed.

“ Dorcas, that table hit hard,” said George, smiling, and placing his hand affectionately on his wife’s shoulder.

“ My dear, dear George!” exclaimed Dorcas; “ I never like the thought of behaving disrespectfully to you, but what could I do? How could I bear the strange lady to hear—to hear—O George!” and Dorcas’s voice faltered, and she bent her head to hide her eyes full of tears.

“ To hear me swear, Dorcas,” said George, gravely.

“ O my dear George!” And now Dorcas lifted her eyes boldly to the grave but loving face by her side. “ You *could* leave that off, you know you could; and you, so good a man in all other things; so good, so true, so loving to me—so fond and proud a father—so prosperous in your business—so clever, George! Yes, ’tis all true. And I so proud of you, so devoted to you, though I say

it of myself; for I never loved any other man in all my life, and I love even your footsteps, you know I do; and yet to see you the slave of that bad, *bad* habit—O George!" The tears flowed down her cheek. Her husband very gravely dried them with the tenderest touch, and said :

"It is a bad habit—I know it, Dorcas ; and I have tried, at least I fancy that I have tried, very hard to cure myself of it ; but I have done it all my life. I can scarcely recollect the time when I did not use bad words—when they did not come to me as natural as if there was no speaking without them. You know that I learnt it as a child in a Protestant farm-house. I used to be vexed with myself at first, for I knew it was wrong. But it became natural. I did not know when I did it, and I did not care. It did not seem any more like any thing wrong. It was rather rude and coarse, perhaps ; but that I thought was all. And from that time to this, bad words have flowed from my mouth like water from a fountain ; and those who know me take no notice of it—it's my way, they say. But I am sorry for this way of mine; I am sorry, Dorcas. I wish I didn't do it ; I wish I could help it, and when you speak to me about it, I have nothing to say."

And then George said he loved her, and would do any thing to please her, because there was not a better or fonder wife in the world, he knew. Poor Dorcas, it did her good to lay her head upon her husband's shoulder and weep as if her heart would break. She thought of her dear little Mary, and how that child had learnt her father's words, and used them every day.

George knew what she was thinking of. The knowledge almost brought tears into his eyes too. "She does not do it sinfully, Dorcas," he said, in a comforting voice. "She does not do it sinfully, I say. She does it like a trick; she is not to blame. And as to myself, I don't swear with a vengeance; 'tis a mere trick with me too. It is not like a bad sin. I have not the least idea of a bad meaning in the things I say; my heart does not go along with my words; I ain't vicious about it; I don't really wish people the bad things my lips say about them."

"Dear George," said Dorcas, "forgive me: a good cry about it comforts me sometimes. But I can't help thinking about the child. It's bad enough in you, George." George stopped her mouth with a kiss, and Dorcas gave him a tender smile; but she went on. "I am afraid of the child's mind growing coarse. She is a dear little thing now; but very quick and very spirited, and if she gets accustomed to bad words, her mind, I fancy, will grow coarse, and her conscience dull, and her heart hard; and to put her into such a wrong way is not fair towards her, George—very different from the way in which I was used when I was a child. Why should I not bring up Mary as well as my parents brought up me?"

"Yes, why not? My dear Dorcas, you say truth. But I am not as good a father to Mary as your father was to you. No, don't contradict—that is the plain truth. That bad habit of mine mixes with all I do, and always puts me wrong. I do declare that I feel at this moment as if I would do any thing to cure myself. Of course it's my re-

ligion I must look to ; I think that I would even give up this place, and go to live at Farley, if I thought that living closer to Mass would help me. Now, Dorcas, tell me, would you like to live at Farley ?”

“ No, George. If we were to leave this place you would lose your business, and at the town of Farley we should still be a mile from the chapel at Farley Park. No, I don’t want to leave. Four miles is not much for us to walk. As to the child, she will soon be able to do as we do. Then we can always spend the day at Milly Dawson’s ; and Mary, being our only one, can be well taught at home. I don’t see that we need leave the quiet of this place for the temptations of a town. No, George, I don’t want to leave—true, we are far from Mass, but I always think of the angel counting the footsteps, and reckoning every one as a good work done to our souls.”

“ Ah, yes, the angel counting ;—I remember your aunt Sally telling that in your father’s and mother’s house at Farley, when I used to be going there to see you.”

Then George reminded his wife of the things that went on at her old home in the town of Farley. How her widowed aunt, Sally Hobson, lived with her father and mother, James and Mary Howel. How Aunt Sally had two children to provide for, and neither of them her own, but her husband’s by a former marriage. Of these two children, Milly Dawson, with whom they always spent their Sundays, was the surviving one. The Howels had a family cf five ; Dorcas Thornton was the youngest ; Sally’s children made seven, and

the children with the parents made ten souls in one house. Farley had been gradually growing into a manufacturing place. From a little quiet old-fashioned town, it was growing large, and becoming closely populated. Howel and all his family had worked at the mill; but Dorcas had not worked there constantly. She was the youngest, and rather delicate, and used to be kept at home to "help mother." All the family had been respectably educated, and all had been well taught their religion.

"And so you recollect Aunt Sally talking of the angels counting the footsteps of those who had a weary way to walk to Mass," said Dorcas to her husband on the night of which we have been speaking; "and you remember it, George?—Well, it's pleasant to remember old times; and, thanks to those who brought us up, they were holy times too. When I think of father and mother among the faithful departed, my chief sorrow is, that I never fully knew their value till they were gone. We were very happy all living together. Aunt Sally's husband's children were like our sisters; and we felt as brothers and sisters when Annie died, and when Milly's husband died. Milly Dawson is a very good woman."

"Yes," said George; "except yourself, Dorcas, I don't know a better. Certainly, as you say, you had a really good bringing up. A poor man's education it was in worldly things—reading and writing and a little of figures, that was all; but in holy things an education—why, my dear Dorcas, an education to fit you for the kingdom of heaven, and what more can I say than that?"

Dorcas smiled. "It is the right and the inherit-

ance of all members of the One Church of our Lord and Saviour. They are all called to fight a fight, to win a victory, and to inherit the kingdom prepared for them."

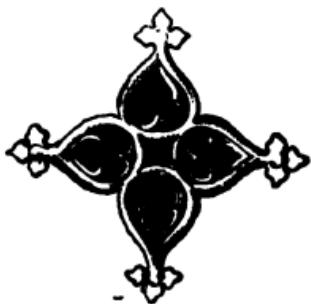
" So they are. I'll try to do better for the future, Dorcas. I'll look back, thankful to be able to take an example from those we have lost. We have not harder work now, I do believe, than those dear ones used to have at Farley. One mile from Mass ; seven children to take there ; two Masses each Sunday—at nine and eleven. Your mother up first, and off with the three youngest children; she was always fasting ; they had a scrap of something to carry in their hands. They were back again about ten. Aunt Sally had got breakfast, and your father and the elder children, and herself, were ready to go off half an hour after your mother came in. Then, the next Sunday, Aunt Sally took your mother's place, and she went first and fasting with the little children. Then the house was so neat, and the children so tidy, and the breakfast so nice ; and all the places found in the books, and all the catechisms so perfect, and prayers said before the bed-room was left that day ; and then Aunt Sally would say, ' there are many who take a long walk to church who yet live not far from Mass ; and angels count the footsteps, whether they fall on a wood floor or a turnpike road ! ' "

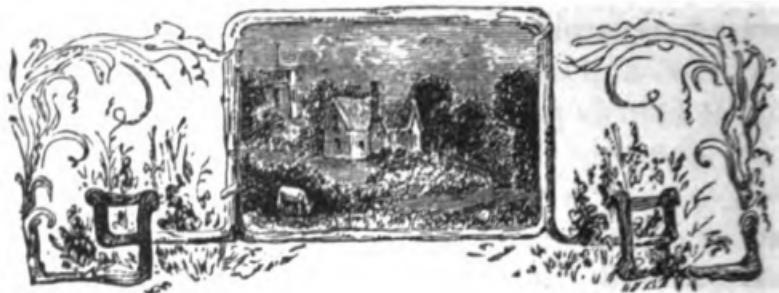
" And we need not go to Farley," said Dorcas, with a smile.

" We'll go to Farley Park Chapel the day after to-morrow, because it is our wedding-day ; and we will receive the Sacraments by God's blessing :

and I will resolve again—*again*,” said George sorrowfully, and once more he sadly said “*again!*”

But Dorcas praised God for that good resolution. And when they looked at Mary fast asleep in her little white bed, so pretty with her rosy cheeks and her long bright curls, and, as yet, so innocent, they pressed each other’s hands as if they would pledge themselves to behave well to her, and they knelt down to say their night prayers at their little bedroom altar, happy in spite of the tears that had been shed.





## CHAPTER III.

### THE HONOURABLE POOR.

**25** HE wedding-day came. It was well spent, spent as they had determined. They got up early, and walked—little Mary walking with them—to Farley Park Chapel. There they received the Sacraments. Little Mary was too small to follow the Mass with the usual prayers. She held a picture-book in her hand, which, at every page, taught her how the Mass proceeded. She had gone through this book often enough with her mother to know what the priest was doing. Now she tried to pray, in her childish way, that Jesus would never forget her, that He would take her to live with the saints and angels in heaven, when she had done His work on earth.

A gentleman of about five-and-twenty years of age was in the chapel not far from where little Mary knelt with her picture-book. He was Mr. Gervys, Mrs. Wardour's nephew; the same who had been fishing a few weeks before in the beautiful Freshfield river. He was not a Catholic, but

he had arrived that morning on a visit to Mrs. Travers of Farley Park ; he had been expected the night before, but an accident had detained him. Finding it was the hour of the daily Mass, he had refused to go into the house, and had entered the chapel, and knelt down near Mary. He was very attentive ; but if Mary had looked up from her book, even she could have told that he was not a Catholic. He was attentive, and there was a respectful look upon his face, but he did not understand what he looked upon. In his heart he was thinking how wonderful the Catholic religion was ; he was saying to himself that the Catholic faith was the only faith that taught true morality ; that it was the real old religion ; and that such thoughts were solemn thoughts he also felt ; so solemn that they made him sometimes say, " Perhaps the Catholic faith is really the very faith that was given by God ! "

When Mass was over, George took little Mary by the hand and led her out of the church, and Dorcas followed him.

" May I see Aunt Sally ? " said the child.

" Not to-day, my dear ; your aunt is engaged with her mistress," said Dorcas.

" Have you seen her, mother ? "

" Yes, I have seen her, and your father has seen her ; and she is coming to Aunt Milly's to see us this afternoon, and she will bring you a picture from Mrs. Travers, and a piece of cake from Miss Mildred."

This seemed to satisfy Mary, and she walked quietly away.

Miss Mildred Travers was an orphan, she had

neither father nor mother ; Mrs. Travers was her grandmother.

Mr. Frank Gervys walked up the broad smooth gravel-road, and stood still before the door of the house, which was wide open, to let in the sweet air of that bright morning. The door opened into a large hall covered with carpet; and as Mr. Gervys stood at the door he could see that an old woman was making some preparations in an opposite room; and he could also hear, by their voices and footsteps, that two persons were coming down stairs.

Miss Mildred Travers walked through the hall supporting a very aged lady on her arm ; they entered the room where Aunt Sally had been at work.

"Your servant, ma'am," said Sally, making a curtsy, for she was what is called an old-fashioned woman. "Your servant, my dear missis, and you, Miss Mildred, the saints in heaven pray for you, for you are seventeen this day, are you not ? The Lord give you many holy and happy years !"

Miss Mildred gave her the prettiest smile possible, but she was just putting her grandmother into her chair, and therefore did not speak.

Sally was sixty years of age. She was short and plump, and fair and rosy-cheeked. Her features were small and pretty, her eyes dark and merry, and she was as neat and tidy as a well-dressed doll. She now folded her arms on her full white apron, held her small head a little on one side, and watched the way in which Miss Mildred settled her grandmother most gently in

her seat, placed the footstool, pushed forward a small table to meet Mrs. Travers' chair, and then stooped her head for the kiss which was the constant reward of this daily service.

As Sally watched her beloved Miss Mildred, her bright black eyes grew brighter and brighter. She pressed her rosy lips together, but yet the smile shewed upon them quite plainly, and when her young lady turned upon her a glance of love and happiness, tears came, and yet a laugh came with them. But Sally wiped her shining cheek, and struggling between tears and laughter, said, "Now, could any one have done better than that for you, my dear mistress? and is she not as dear a child as ever was given to age and infirmity—and can any one help loving her, do you suppose?"

Old Mrs. Travers looked on her grand-child with a beaming eye, and held out her hand to Sally. But Sally could not take the hand, for Miss Mildred was kissing her, and saying that she was a dear invaluable old darling. So Mrs. Travers dropped her hand upon the table, and, leaning back in her chair, laughed to see her granddaughter, and Sally laughed on her own account,—and so ended Sally's congratulations to her mistresses, old and young.

And now Mr. Gervys came in, and he had his breakfast with the ladies. Mrs. Travers talked of his aunt, Mrs. Wardour, and wished that she could have come with him; and he spoke of Mrs. Wardour being at Freshfield, and of her having greatly recovered her health and spirits.

After breakfast, Mr. Gervys took a few turns upon a broad terrace walk outside the drawing-

room windows, and then he suddenly re-entered the house, and going down a passage which led out of the hall, he stopped before a door and knocked.

"Come in," said a voice from within.

"It is I,—it is Frank Gervys," he said, as he opened the door and walked into the room.

"My dear Frank,—how do you do? So you came early this morning instead of coming last night."

"Yes, Father Clarke, I came early, and I have been to Mass."

Father Clarke smiled and shook his head. Then they sat down.

"Am I disturbing you?" said Mr. Gervys.

"No. In an hour I must set off to go to the town, till then I shall be delighted to have you with me."

"May I go to Farley with you?"

"If you like; but why?"

"Only for more talk,—I am going away tomorrow."

"And what have you got to say?"

"What is the name of a stout, fine, handsome man, with, I suppose, his wife and child? They were at Mass this morning. I know all the tenantry about this place, but this man's face was new to me."

Father Clarke thought for a moment, then he said: "Perhaps it was George Thornton and his wife and child. He is a blacksmith, and lives at Freshfield. Why do you ask?"

"It is such a nice little girl."

"Did you speak to them?"

"No; but it struck me that she was an uncommon child."

"Uncommon! oh, no, not at all! why should a nice child be uncommon?"

I must here tell you that Father Clarke was an old man, with his head bowed upon his breast. Mr. Gervys had known and admired him for many years. He knew that when he lifted his head up with a sudden motion, and spoke quickly and in a sharp tone, he was always greatly interested in the subject spoken of. Father Clarke did all this when he said, "Why should a nice child be uncommon?" And so Mr. Gervys laughed and said, "I can't tell *why*, but I can tell that *it is so*. My knowledge of English children comes to this; that in the towns they are wickedly sharp, and very often mischievous theives; and that in the country they are rude troublesome little animals, whose great delight is in vulgarity and noise,—calling names, halloing after you, throwing gravel, dirt, and stones, running under your horses' heads on purpose to frighten you, pointing their fingers at you when you have pulled up to prevent their being killed, and crying out '*whip behind*', and following you with roars of rude laughter as soon as you have passed on."

Father Clarke laughed.

"Very rude and vulgar no doubt," he said, "but they do worse than that, worse than that to me,—to *me*, a poor old man on the brink of the grave." And Father Clarke looked up with such a bright smile on his face that Mr. Gervys smiled too.

" I say then that nice children *are* uncommon," said Mr. Gervys.

" The state of your towns, villages, and highways is enough to prove to you that the Protestant religion is *not* from God. Just for one moment think with me, of how the Church, *the one true Catholic Church*, Frank, regards little children as human creatures with souls unstained by sin. These souls have been cleansed in the waters of baptism ; they are not yet sinners through the temptations of the world, or the recklessness of their own evil passions ; they are the fairest and loveliest part of God's world. They are in a peculiar way God's own : every person to whom the care of children is given receives a trust from God. So when I see parents taking little care of their children, and letting these innocent creatures get into sin, and remain in shame and ignorance, I say to them, ' You are robbers, and very wicked robbers ; for you are robbing God and defrauding heaven.' The Church insists on children being taken proper care of, and woe to those who disobey her ; Christianity is not rude—Christianity is not insolent ; it does not turn strangers into scorn, or call names. It is full of happiness. It rejoices with the joyful, and weeps with the distressed. How beautiful an innocent child is you are told plainly enough. Our Lord has declared that of such are the kingdom of heaven, and that the child-like spirit must belong to His followers. Now what can be said too hard of people who bring up these beautiful lambs of the fold so badly as to make them like coarse brutes, so that in

looking at them we don't see the trusting spirit of loving obedience which we ought to imitate, but self-will and evil passions?"

"It is a true picture," said Mr. Gervys; "but are Catholic children very different from Protestant children?"

"Yes; *very* different. When they associate with Protestants they learn their views; while they are young they get bad tricks; when they are older these tricks may become habits, which they know to be bad—which they intend to break; and they are often resolving and trying to reform. In some cases, though well brought up, a Catholic becomes tired of this fight with the evil one, and sinks down to a careless bad life; but even such a person has this great advantage: he knows where help and strength is to be found; though he is a prodigal son, yet he knows that he has a father's house; and I do not like to think that there are many who die without returning to it."

Here Father Clarke rose up and said he must walk to Farley, and that Mr. Gervys could go with him, if he liked. So they walked to Farley together. As Father Clarke was old, and the weather was warm, they did not walk fast. Mr. Gervys thought it an edifying sight to see the aged priest toiling away to the town of Farley, which was what people call "a dreadful place."

"This is a miserably fatiguing life for you," he said.

"Fatiguing? Yes, I'm tired after my work sometimes; but not fatiguing in your sense, Frank. Where there is love, no one feels labour."

"Love!" repeated Mr. Gervys; "yes, of course you love the poor for your Master's sake."

"Yes, for my Master's sake," said Father Clarke, "and for *their own sakes* too, Frank."

"I *pity* the poor, I mean the miserably poor, with all my heart," said Mr. Gervys.

"Pity won't do," said Father Clarke, in his most positive way. "When you are a Catholic, if you ever come to so great a blessing, you will love the poor, love them for their own sakes, love them with all your heart."

"Don't think ill of me; but I don't understand you," said Mr. Gervys. "Tell me exactly what you feel, if you can."

"I feel this: I see in this country very poor, miserably poor Catholics, scarcely able to get bread, because Protestants dare to dislike God's religion. I see them condemned to unwholesome dwellings; I see their children forced to work almost as soon as they have strength to stand; I see sickness and deformity as the consequence of this, and I *pity* these persons very much. But I see this worn-out wife, and toil-spent father, and these fevered children in a pestilential place they call their home, *serving God*, and then I *love* them. And when I see them blessing God, and glorifying Him by leading a holy life in the midst of temptation; when I see them bringing up their children as heirs of the kingdom of heaven, knowing and practising their religion, then I do more than love them,—I stand astonished at God's grace which can do so much; I am humbled before His wonderful power, which I see shewn in these persons'

lives ; I know that Jesus loves them, and those whom He loves I not only love but honour."

" I think that I understand you now," said Mr. Gervys; and he walked on for some way without speaking. At last he said, " To what part of Farley are you going ?"

" To a part not well known to you—to the house of a woman called Amelia Dawson. She is our good Sally's step-daughter. Milly is a widow with seven children, and very poor. Two of the children are sick, and I am going to see them. I think her eldest boy James is one of the most promising youths I ever saw."

" And they are very poor," said Mr. Gervys.  
" And no father ?"

" Died two years ago."

" And ignorant, of course."

" Ignorant ! No, sir," said Father Clarke ; " all can say their prayers and preserve their morality. Three can say their catechism and understand it well, and are preparing for their first communion ; and these three can all read, and one of them (James) can write and do a little ciphering, and serve Mass. I don't call any of them ignorant."

" Nor do I, after your description. Where have they learnt all this ?"

" Not at school. James was at school for a short time during his father's life ; that was all. But where there's a will there's a way ; and where there's a holy life there's God's blessing ; and it is better to wish a child a mother like Milly Dawson than to wish him ten thousand pounds. But here we are ; and now you must go back."

Mr. Gervys saw Father Clarke turn down an

unpaved way into a sort of yard, and knock at a closed door. Father Clarke went in, and Mr. Gervys walked back, thinking of holy poor people, and wondering if there really were such people as the priest had described.

When he got back, he went into the breakfast-room, and there he found Miss Travers. She was sitting on a low chair at work upon a great many yards of calico. She had known Mr. Gervys all her life; they were almost like brother and sister.

"What are you doing?" asked Mr. Gervys.

"I am hemming a pair of sheets for Milly Dawson's sick children. Sally will take them to her this evening; so I am obliged to be busy."

Mr. Gervys thought that he should like to hear something more about holy poor people, so he said:

"What sort of a person is Milly Dawson?"

Miss Travers was very light-hearted, and of a very merry, gay, happy disposition. She thought it very odd that Mr. Gervys should ask questions about poor Catholics at Farley. He had never asked such questions before. She looked up at him and almost laughed. He repeated his question.

"Milly Dawson is a great friend of mine," she answered.

"A great friend! Nonsense!" said Mr. Gervys.

"No, Frank, not nonsense; I really love her."

"I don't believe you, Mildred," said Mr. Gervys. "You mean that she is very poor, and that you pity her."

"No, Frank, I don't mean that. Tell me why we should not love each other."

"Tell me what she is like."

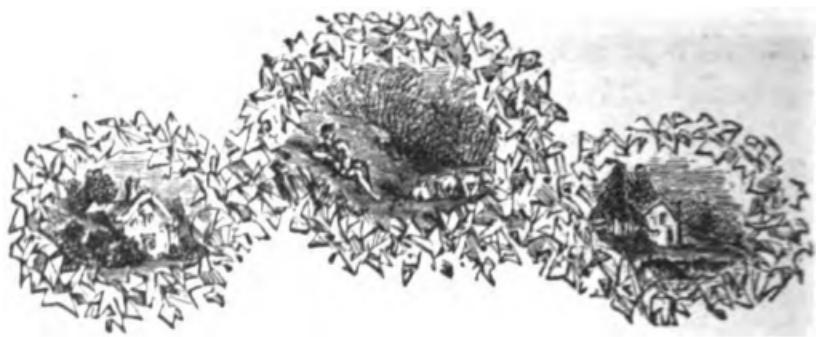
"Like a poor woman—ill-clothed and over-worked."

"And you love her?" exclaimed Mr. Gervys; and now he really laughed out loud. But Miss Travers did not laugh; she looked very serious, and very much in earnest.

"O Frank!" she said, "Milly is humble, patient, and modest; and she has an invincible trust in God. She kneels before the altar, and glories in the riches of grace. She is full of contentment—she is willing to suffer; and she finds God—His presence, His sanctifying power—in all she does. Her life is a purifying fire. O Frank! I often think that I am not worthy to call myself a friend of hers."

"I understand you now, Mildred; I think that I perfectly understand you." And so saying, Mr. Gervys walked away, and wondered when Father Clarke would be at home; and there was something working in his heart which made him wish that he was as good as Milly Dawson.

And so this day passed away, and George and Dorcas and little Mary got safely back to Freshfield: and though Dorcas was very thankful for the good resolutions her husband had made, she laid a heavy head upon her pillow, and prayed long, very long and very fervently, for him after he was fast asleep. And why? She had never heard little Mary pour forth more bad words than she had uttered that night; and the mother's good Christian heart trembled for fear of what that bad habit might bring upon her child.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE SCANDAL.

**W**HEN Mr. Gervys left Farley Park he paid a visit to his aunt at Freshfield. They spoke to each other of George and Dorcas Thornton, and Mrs. Wardour was delighted with her nephew's account of little Mary and her picture-book at Mass. They wandered about together almost all day long ; and one lovely afternoon they found themselves at Dorcas Thornton's cottage door.

They knocked, and the door was opened : Dorcas looked pleased. She did not know Mr. Gervys ; but he told her that he was a friend of Father Clarke, and then she was very glad to see him. Chairs were set, and they were soon talking together very pleasantly. George came home to tea, and little Mary ran in with him. Mr. Gervys asked Mary to shew him her pictures, and he promised to give her some new ones.

“ But perhaps they are not good pictures, and father and mother won't let me look at any but good pictures,” said Mary.

" And why do you think that I should not give you good pictures ?"

" Because you are not a Catholic. Would they not teach you to be a true Christian when you were little ?" asked Mary.

" At all events they did not," said Mr. Gervys.

" O Frank ! what are you saying ?" cried his aunt.

" Oh, Mary understands me," he answered ; " if I send my pictures through Father Clarke, then you will accept them ?"

" Oh, yes ! and thank you — thank you ; for I love pictures, and mother can tell me all about every picture that ever was made."

Mr. Gervys rose up very much pleased with his visit. He and his aunt took leave of the Thorntons. They were asked to call again, and they promised that they would. Accordingly a day came when they again reached the cottage door.

It happened that something had vexed George very much at the blacksmith's shop, and a man who had argued the thing with him had vexed him still more. He was now in his cottage telling all about it in his most boisterous way ; sometimes swearing in his anger, and then, in his fun, turning the man into ridicule, and loading him with scoffing terms, bad words, and coarse jests. While Mr. Gervys had his hand on the door he heard what was going on. He hesitated a moment ; he did not like to go away ; he could not go in,— his aunt turned aside. In that moment Dorcas spoke, but George interrupted her impatiently, saying, " Don't, Dorcas ; I *am* vexed, of course I am, I don't deny that ; but as to bad words, I can't help it,— when I'm vexed they *will* come. I would

give years of life to know that I should ever cure myself; but I do really believe that I never shall, so just let things alone, for I never—”

At this moment Mr. Gervys entered the house, and stood still in silent surprise, and at the same moment a voice came from a door just opposite which led through a small porch into the garden behind the house; that voice attracted George's attention; he and Dorcas looked round and did not observe Mr. Gervys. The voice said, “The just man shall fall seven times;” and then old Father Clarke walked in, and finished the sentence in the kitchen, “the just man shall fall seven times, *and shall rise again.*” He put his hand on George's shoulder and said, “My son, my son, never despair, never even speak despairing words; you have a battle before you, never say that you cannot win it.”

George was going to speak, but Mr. Gervys stopped him.

“No, Thornton, don't speak till I am gone; and I only stopped to say to you that I was entering the house just as Father Clarke spoke, and I did not like to go without telling you that I have heard but a few words, and beg your pardon for hearing them. Good bye.”

“No, sir; why should you go? If you have heard my fault, I should like you, Mr. Gervys, to hear my excuse.”

“Shall I stay?” said Mr. Gervys, looking at Father Clarke.

“Yes, yes, stay, certainly, as Thornton has asked you.”

Little Mary was not in the room. Dorcas was ironing some linen at a side-table.

"This, sir, is my excuse," said Thornton. "From the time I could earn a penny by driving birds off the farmer's fields, I was sent to work. I learnt my religion of an evening, and said my catechism to the priest on Sundays. I worked with Protestants. It was a large place. The Squire lived in a fine house and kept hunters. He had a blacksmith's forge on his premises. No horse ever went off the place to be shod. There I first got a notion of my trade. I worked on that farm till I was eight and twenty. From the time I was ten or twelve years old, I heard swearing, and bad words, and taking the holy Names in vain, from morning till night, from men, women, and children, till I was twenty-eight. I got into the way myself. I began young, and I have never been able to leave it off. I don't justify myself any more than to say that I don't do it with malice, I only do it as a trick,— a bad trick, I know it is, and I am sorry that you, Mr. Gervys, should have heard me; for I know very well that, although you Protestants abuse our religion as all that's bad, you always expect that our conduct should be better than your own, that we should be living saints,— and so, sir, I'm sorry you heard me; but I hope that the Lord will not judge me hard, and you, Father Clarke, I hope you believe me?"

"Yes, Thornton, I believe you undoubtingly. But I answer your excuse by saying, that all habits, such as swearing, and all varieties of bad words, arise from a want of knowledge of God. You neither know Him nor love Him as you ought to do."

George Thornton sunk into a chair, and a sigh burst forth from the depth of his heart.

" Now let us fancy a case," said Father Clarke, sitting down, and making Mr. Gervys sit down also. " Fancy this case with me, George. Suppose that you had a vine ; suppose you had planted it where you had got together all things to make it thrive ; suppose you had cultivated it to produce good grapes ; suppose you had given a life of labour to this vine, and shed your very life-blood for its nourishment. Now suppose that this vine bore you *some* bunches of grapes, so large and fine as to give you glory ; but others—many others—small, shrivelled, diseased, unfit to be looked at. You would not throw that vine to the dunghill for the sake of the few fine grapes ; but would you think that it repaid you for the care and toil, the interest and regard, you had bestowed upon it ? "

" No, father, no ; I should not think myself repaid, I should not think that I was served well by that vine ; and I know your meaning,—that is the way in which *I* serve God."

" Then begin this day, this moment to amend," said the priest. " This minute begin to prune from the vine all those diseased parts, and give all good fruit in future."

" But to leave off that is difficult. Oh, it is hard, after such a long practice. O father, I don't feel that I've strength."

" It requires the cultivation of the spirit of knowledge and love," said Father Clarke. " To know God and to love God is to serve God. A man's mind cannot separate these three. If you don't serve Him properly, you don't know Him as you ought to know Him, or love Him as you should try to love Him. The thought of what God ha-

done for your soul will fill you with ardour and zeal. Don't fancy yourself helpless when God has given you the Church for your guardian and guide; and don't talk of want of strength when Jesus cleanses you with His blood in the confessional, and feeds your soul from the altar with Himself. Make a resolution, and pray for strength to keep it. Here," [Father Clarke took a book from his pocket, and drew a picture from between its leaves,] "here is our Lord shewing you His Sacred Heart burning with love; take this, think devoutly on it, and begin again *this moment* the flight from sin."

George rose up to receive the gift—a gift so small, and yet so great! Dorcas looked round, and her loving eyes met her husband's for a moment; and, turning to her work again, she prayed silently for blessings on that hour.

But before Father Clarke left the house, he spoke once more to George, taking him to the window to speak more privately. Mr. Gervys seeing what Father Clarke wished, began to talk to Dorcas about their garden, and the bees he saw they kept there, so the few last words were not listened to. But those words George never forgot.

Father Clarke said, "You teach evil to your child; you will be her snare and her scandal. You do not know what this may lead to. Don't, oh, don't be that child's tempter. What would you have to answer if God were to ask her soul of you? Would it be any excuse in that day, and in such a case, for you to reply, that you had never used bad words with malice,—that *with you* it had been only a trick?"

The two grasped each other's hands. Not another word was spoken. George loved his child intensely, and at no moment in his life had he more loved and honoured that aged servant of God. He did not speak; but his whole soul seemed to promise well to Father Clarke as he looked him fixedly and thankfully in the face.

Mr. Gervys and the priest left the house together. They were walking across the common to Mrs. Wardour's lodgings. Mr. Gervys began to speak of George Thornton. He said it was very shocking for a Catholic to be the slave of such a habit.

"Very, very shocking," said the priest gravely; "but *you* are not to blame him. You are outside the fold, and have no right to judge those that are within. Beware, for your soul's sake, beware of thinking for one moment that you are better than he. For that man,—though *he* is the slave of a bad habit,—the purifying stream flows, and he can wash and be clean; for that man the heavenly manna descends from heaven, and he eats and lives; he is not separated from God; but *you*,—where are you? He is a lamb of the fold; but *you*, *you* are a starving wanderer in a rocky desert; and no shepherd follows *you*, for you own no shepherd's care. O Frank, I would rather be the most miserable Catholic that ever lived, provided he was not in mortal sin, than you with all you possess, for you have *no faith*."

Such words as these—and such words were often said to Mr. Gervys by Father Clarke—made *some* impression, certainly; but time passed on, and no conversion followed them.

Mrs. Wardour returned to Castle Gervys. Both her nephew and herself were occasionally guests at Farley Park. When there Mr. Gervys went to Mass, talked to Mrs. Travers, Miss Mildred Travers, and Father Clarke, and gave them pain and pleasure by turns ; but no conversion came. And so years passed on—six years, and Mary Thornton was a fine, tall, clever, handsome girl of fifteen years of age.

Mr. Gervys still came to Freshfield to fish in that celebrated trout-stream, and sometimes his aunt came with him. They always went to see the Thorntons ; they asked about them in the village, and were always interested in the account of all that had happened since they had last been there. They now heard of Dorcas, the usual history of her gentle goodness ; of George that he was still the victim of the vice of swearing, the slave of the early habit of bad words ; and they heard of Mary that she was very clever, very spirited, and “ something saucy, considering her years.”

Once again Mr. Gervys had ventured to say to Father Clarke that he was very much shocked at George Thornton's continuance in an evil habit ; and once again the priest had reproved him.

“ Look to yourself,” he had said. “ For years you have been hearing and reading about the Catholic faith ; you have no belief in any thing else. You have no excuse for remaining out of the Church.”

“ But if I were in the Church, I think I should be more faithful to grace than George is.”

So Mr. Gervys argued ; but Father Clarke said,

" No, sir ; you are not faithful to such grace as has been bestowed on you already. He who is not faithful to a little has no right to think that he should be faithful to much. Mr. Gervys, you may live to learn from the Thorntons yet, and to bless God for it."





## CHAPTER V.

### THE WORLD.

MARY THORNTON's fifteenth birthday was passed, and her mother was very anxious to get her into a good place in service, "under some elderly, steady servant," Dorcas used to say; "for Mary wants guiding."

Dorcas had given up speaking to her husband about his bad habit now; but she prayed for him more than ever. She certainly had not much hope that he would ever leave it off; and she was, on this very account, anxious to get Mary out as a servant. Mary used bad words very freely; she was very lively and high-spirited; and when, in telling any thing, coarse expressions or even oaths occurred, she had a way of saying them that made her father laugh, and thus Mary was encouraged. But the misery of this almost broke the mother's heart; and when she spoke to the child she got no comfort. It was only a loud laugh, or perhaps something more gentle, a smile and a kiss; but the same excuse always. "Dear mother, you don't think that I mean any harm; it is only a little fun. Oh, a free word now and

then is nothing ; 'tis a mere habit, nothing more than a trick. There, mother, don't look so grave ; a few words are not going to hurt me."

And so the mother shrunk back, and more and more comforted herself with prayer ; and sometimes she would say, when she happened to hear any thing more than usually disagreeable, " Can this be the same child as she who used to tell her pictures so devoutly at my knee ?" And yet the next moment tears would come, and Dorcas would say to herself, " But she always used bad words."

George Thornton did not want Mary to go to service ; he was extremely fond of her, and could not bear the idea of parting with her. But Dorcas was firm ; and Mary herself thought that she should like to go.

One thing which made Dorcas so positive was this : she had observed a growing fondness in James Dawson for Mary, and she wished for the marriage with all her heart. James was one of the best young men that Dorcas had ever known. He was now just twenty. He had got, through Father Clarke, a place in a bank at Farley. He would be sure to rise, for he would be sure to behave well. He was an excellent son ; and though he had to live in a lodging by himself, he helped the family at home, and saved money besides. He had taken a small piece of land, and turned it into a garden. This was his delight morning and evening, when he worked hard in it, and set the younger children, who had no work elsewhere, their daily tasks among the crops. It was quite a source of riches to the family : it served them with vegetables and kept a pig. Every one in Farley

knew that James's friends were poor ; but every one knew that they were respectable ; and no one in the bank did his work more to the satisfaction of the employers than did James.

Dorcas felt that such a young man would make a good husband for Mary, and she was very glad to feel that he liked her. Therefore, for James's sake, she wished to get Mary away from her father, that she might get cured of *bad words* in some strict house, where she would be well looked after. It was a hard thing for Dorcas to allow to her own heart—but she did allow it—that Mary had better be separated from her father.

Many inquiries were made for such a place as would suit a girl of fifteen, who was strong and clever ; but not for many months could Dorcas satisfy herself. At last there came a knock at the door one evening, and a very nice-looking middle-aged woman entered. She introduced herself as Mrs. Williams, housekeeper in Mrs. Barton's family. Barton Court was a very fine place about twenty miles off. Dorcas and George had often heard of it, for Mr. Barton was a Catholic. Mrs. Williams said that her master and mistress were on a visit to a family in the neighbourhood ; that they wanted a girl to wait on the housekeeper's room, and help in the house-work under the upper housemaid, and they had heard of Mary Thornton. " Now, you see," said Mrs. Williams, " my mistress, Lady Sarah, being a Protestant, as I am also, Mrs. Thornton, she would like a Protestant girl ; but my master, being a Catholic, he wishes for a Catholic girl. They heard of your daughter, how-

ever, and so they sent for me to see about it. Do you think our place would suit?"

"Yes, I do," said Dorcas. "But I should like to hear more about it. Are any of the other servants Catholics?"

"Oh, yes; cook is a Catholic, and Kate the kitchen-maid. Cook is very strict, and keeps Kate strict too."

"I should like my Mary to be in Kate's place, then," said Dorcas, with a smile.

"Dear me, Mrs. Thornton, I am sure you would not, if you knew what a place I am offering you! such a different place—such a genteel place compared to a kitchen-maid's!"

"The holiest is the best. I hope never to put this world against the next," said Dorcas. "But I didn't mean to find fault, or to seem discontented. Will you please to go on, Mrs. Williams?"

"The coachman is a Protestant and the under-footman—you see, they go with my lady to church; but master's groom and valet are your sort, and so is the first footman and the butler. Now, I call these two last very liberal men. They sit with me, and I like them very much. All the other women are Protestants."

"What sort of Catholics are the groom and valet?"

"Oh, the groom is the oldest-fashioned man!—gets laughed at sometimes—says his prayers when he's exercising the horses, they say; but, there!—I don't believe that. Mustn't believe all the fun you hear, you know, Mrs. Thornton."

"But I see no fun in it. I am very much

pleased," said Dorcas. "If he has got to walk those fine horses of Mr. Barton's every day for their exercise, he must spend more hours in his saddle than he can spend minutes on his knees: I hope he does say his prayers on horseback."

"Well, well," said Mrs. Williams, rather impatiently, "I don't understand these things; but I am quite liberal. Will your daughter take our place?"

"And I beg your pardon if I have been too free in speaking," said Dorcas; "only, Mrs. Williams, I mean to say, that Catholics who are getting their living sometimes manage to do two things at a time, and to do them both well. Many a *Hail Mary!* is said over a child we are dressing; many a hymn or litany sung or said, aloud or in the heart, while kneading our bread or mixing our puddings; many an act of faith, hope, charity, and contrition at the ironing-table; and many a girl going on her knees to scrub the kitchen-floor has taken the occasion to think of the foot of the cross, and to lift up her heart in an act of love to Him who redeemed her there."

"Why, you'd suit our master exactly," said Mrs. Williams; "you seem quite of the sort he likes. But for myself, I only pretend to be liberal. If Mary comes, she will be treated well, as the rest are treated; and at her age she can't expect to find another such place."

There was a little more talk. George was consulted, and so was Mary. The end was, that Mary went to Barton Court the next week.

The house seemed empty and desolate without her. George missed her very much; but her let-

ters were frequent; and as they were cheerful and happy, the parents soon became satisfied and contented.

Six months passed. Mary's sixteenth birthday was kept by Milly Dawson and James arriving at Freshfield to spend the day. Dorcas liked James better than ever. He was a young man after her own heart. A month more past, another and another, Mary did not write as often as usual. Just as the year was up, Mary wrote to say that she was going to leave her place, and that she might be expected back immediately. She gave no reason. It made her parents rather nervous; but they were not kept long in suspense. Mary arrived; and they were so glad to see her beloved face again, that they could not begin with regrets at her having lost her place.

Mary was very glad to see them; and she looked round the kitchen with loving eyes, and when the clock struck, said, "There! I should know that sound to be *our* clock at the other end of the world." Father and mother kissed her and loved her, and told her she was welcome a hundred times, and wondered if they could ever bring themselves to part with her again. When the evening closed in, Dorcas stirred the fire—for it was rather chilly—and she got a nice supper of ham and eggs, fried potatoes, and coffee. She pulled the table towards the fire, placed the chairs, and shut the shutters, and lighted the candle rather earlier than usual, that they might enjoy Mary's company on the first night undisturbed.

Mary was quite a woman to look at. She was grown tall, and was very prettily formed. Her

face was handsome, and like her father's; she had the same bright complexion and very dark curling hair. Her eyes, too, were black like his; but her mother's soft expression was in them, except when any thing excited her, and then there would come a quick, sharp glance, which her mother could never bear: it looked too bold.

Now, however, she sat quietly by the fire at her mother's side, and her happy father opposite, and they were all making a very comfortable supper.

At last the question came which Dorcas had from the beginning been dreading in her heart.

"Well, my Mary," said George, "my dear, dear daughter, tell us now for what cause you left your place; how didn't it suit you?"

"Oh, it suited me very well," said Mary, with a little toss of her head, and giving that particular look which her mother did not like. "It suited me, I assure you—a very good place—I liked it very much; but I had my warning—a week's warning and a month's wages—and I took it because I couldn't help it."

"And what fault did they find with *you*? What did any of them dare to say against *you*?" asked George angrily.

For the first time in her life Mary smiled at her father's anger. He saw the smile, and it vexed him sorely.

"I hope you haven't learnt to be saucy, young woman," he said, very severely.

"No, father," said Mary quietly, and playing with her spoon and her coffee-cup; "no, father, I ain't saucy. Father!"—she looked up in his face—"Father, *I only swear!*"

The bread dropped from George Thornton's hand; he jumped up from his seat, and walked across the room and stood still with his eyes fixed upon that little picture which Father Clarke had given him so many years ago, and which now hung in a small gilt frame against the wall.

Dorcas knew that he would like to know all about it; so she said, "Tell your father, and tell all truly and patiently, Mary."

The girl put her hand into her mother's. "It is soon told," she said. "The place was a good place; the house pleasant, the work not too much. I did it all very well, and pleased them. I could not make friends with the good Catholics. Some were very good; they did not know how much I loved them in my heart. I couldn't explain things to them. They soon found out my bad trick, and so thought I was ruder and coarser, and a worse girl than I was. However, they were kind; but my place was not with them, and they did not encourage me to give them my company more than was just convenient. Now, in the housekeeper's room they were very *liberal*. I hate that word, as they used it. In their mouths, it meant that, for their own pride and pleasure, they would any time fling shame and scandal upon religion. Mrs. Williams was a kind-hearted, good-tempered person, and very clever in her place; but she was a free-speaking, free-thinking, and free-living woman. She, too, soon found out my trick of bad words; but she didn't care—it amused her, I think. I think, too, that part of the fun lay in its being a Catholic who swore. But though she didn't blame me, I blamed her; and she didn't like being found

fault with. She used to say, that there was no harm in a glass of beer or wine, no harm in a game at cards, and no harm in a pleasant evening; and all that was true enough. But then she, and the others with her, would drink till they were drunk, and play till they gambled; and as to their pleasant evenings, they always lasted till to-morrow morning; and I used to complain, for they, of course, expected me to put every thing away after them. Neither Mr. Barton nor Lady Sarah knew a word of their doings; so, knowing that I had an unruly tongue, they were afraid that I should let it out. Therefore, one morning, after I had blamed them pretty strongly, and complained of being kept up till two o'clock in the morning, Mrs. Williams told Lady Sarah that I must be parted with, for my language was too bad for the housekeeper's room. The first thing I knew of this was that I was ordered into the breakfast-room. When I opened the door, there I saw Lady Sarah sitting at her work-table, and Mr. Barton walking up and down the room. I made my curtsy, and looked towards my mistress; but master spoke. 'Mary,' he said, 'are you a Catholic?' 'Oh, yes, sir.' 'Do you go to your duties?' 'Not since Easter, sir.' I was vexed to be obliged to say this; but I had got to swear so badly sometimes—mother, dear mother, I can say so to you—that I even felt turned against God, because I knew I treated Him so scornfully. Mr. Barton turned to Lady Sarah. 'We will never have a girl in that place again,' he said; 'I shall answer for it, if we do, at the day of judgment.' Then turning to me, he said, 'I think you tell the truth.' 'Yes, sir,' I answered. 'Well,'

said he, ‘do you swear?’ ‘Yes, sir,’ said I. Lady Sarah looked up very sweetly at me. ‘My dear girl,’ she said, ‘I am surprised to hear you say so. I was crying by that time; but I stopped my tears as soon as I could, and said steadily enough, ‘Please, ma’am, ’tis true I do swear—I do take the holy names in vain—I *do* use bad words—but I do *not* tell lies;’ and then I believe that I began to cry again. ‘Mary,’ said master, ‘is it an old habit?’ ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘Have you done it worse since you have been here?’ ‘Yes, sir.’ ‘I am very sorry,’ he said, ‘and so is Lady Sarah; but she will be a friend to you, and try to get you another place. You are to go from here. Write to your parents, and go next week.’ Then he paid me my half-year’s wages himself; and when I went out of the room, Lady Sarah put five shillings into my hand, and said, ‘I respect you for telling the truth.’ And so, mother, I am here.”

“And you are come to a good home, and a home where you are welcome, and where you are no burden, and where father and mother love you better than their lives; so, Mary, forget the past, except for the good that it may bring to your soul. Come, father, come and kiss her!”

Then George Thornton came back to the table. All the time that Mary had taken for her story, he had stood stiff and motionless before that picture of his Saviour’s heart of love; but he went to his wife and kissed her first, and said, “Blessed are the peace-makers, for they shall be called the children of God.” And then he strained his daughter to his heart, and they forgave each other.

Mary stayed at home about three months. During that time very few words came from her father's lips. He had begun the flight from sin, and begun with a brave heart. Father Clarke's words were fresh in his mind. "If God requires her soul at your hands, will it be any excuse to say, that with you bad words were only a trick?"

In about three months a letter was received from Lady Sarah Barton. Some friends of hers were going to London for the pleasures and gaieties of the season. They expected to be out a great deal, and they were a large family. They therefore wished to take a young person with them to assist their own maid in her duties. Lady Sarah said that they were not Catholics, but that Mr. Barton would make some arrangements for her to hear Mass and go to her duties. The family would not require her for more than three months; but Lady Sarah had no doubt that she would gain a good character there.

Mary took the place very gladly. She met the family at an appointed place, and went with them to London.

They had two letters quickly from her: one to say that she was arrived, the other to say her place was very fatiguing—so fatiguing that she feared about being able to keep it; yet that she meant to try; only they were not to expect many letters from her. Three months passed; the family were detained in London; Mary said she was tired to death, and quite out of spirits. Her father had almost determined to go to London, and bring her home himself, when, one dark stormy

night in the first week in November, they heard her voice outside the door.

George jumped up, and with Dorcas by his side, he opened the door: there was Mary; she was dripping wet, and speaking to two boys, who were carrying her trunk between them. Her father seized the box, and the youths, who had just been paid, ran away. In an instant they were inside the house, and the door was quickly closed. Thornton dropped the box on the floor; Dorcas held up the candle to her daughter's face. She did not look like the same girl they had parted with. Her bonnet was flung back from her face, her long black curls hung wet half-way to her waist, her cheeks were thin, every feature looked sharp and drawn, and her sunk eyes were strangely bright.

You might have heard the mother's heart beat, so dreadfully was she distressed. Yet she strove to *look* calm, and she succeeded; but she could not have spoken; no, not to save her life. There she stood, with her heart knock, knock, and her eyes on her husband's face, for she could not bear to look on Mary.

"What is it?" said George, solemnly. "Tell it all in a moment, Mary; something is wrong; tell it out, my child, and we will bear it."

"*I drink now, father!*" she said, and sank weeping into a chair.

Something like a convulsion passed over Dorcas. Strange sobs were rising; she could not stop them, they would come. Once she almost screamed; then, to draw off attention, she stooped to move her daughter's heavy trunk. She rose up quickly; something had happened, her mouth was full of

blood ; she looked up miserably at her husband ; he saw it floating about her lips ; he clasped her in his arms—she had broken a blood-vessel.

"I will go for the doctor," exclaimed Mary ; and in the same moment she was out of the house.

We will tell Mary's story now. Her few words, "I drink now, father," contained the simple truth. At Mr. Barton's she had first begun. When she had had to stay up late, she had taken spirits and water to keep herself awake—the housekeeper used to give it to her ; it was only an occasional thing, not a circumstance so often repeated as to attract remark. Mary took it ; and found that it helped her young eyes to keep open, and gave energy to her young limbs to do work at an hour when they ought to have been at rest in bed. When she went to London she found the work more than she could do ; still, she never thought of drinking. But one night the family went out late, when Mary thought that they were going to remain at home. She had really looked forward to getting early to bed ; but the young ladies' maid was ill, and she was obliged to take her place. Mary had not, as we know, been brought up to restrain her tongue, so she relieved her mind, and expressed her vexation in the old way—bad words. She was near a footman's pantry when she spoke. The man came out, and seeing her, said, "What, Mary ! " "Yes ; and I can't help it." "'Tis trying, and you are but young : sleep is sweet, till you've learnt to do without it. But those were big words—here, take this, poor girl !" He handed her a glass, in which he had been mixing some-

thing as he spoke. Perhaps he did it kindly; but it was a sad gift—it reminded her of the long evenings at Barton Court. She took it—had it again and again; and at last could not do without it. Then she was found out, and discharged in a hurry. She left the house; and her heart was saying, “Oh, bad words! bad words! it is that that has brought me to this.”

The doctor came. He said it was a very bad case, and thought that Dorcas might die. George Thornton set off without delay to Farley Park. Dorcas was to receive the last Sacraments. He borrowed the miller’s pony, and was thankful to see the rain and wind abating, for he hoped to get Father Clarke to his house before morning. This beloved priest, though now so old, continued to attend those whom he had known from infancy, and who still desired his ministrations; all others were attended by another priest, Father Bernard, who had lived in the town of Farley for some time. George got to Farley Park about half-past ten o’clock. He went to the stables first, and then entered the kitchen. One woman only was standing there. She observed that Thornton looked in trouble; but she shewed no surprise at it. He said, “Can I see Father Clarke?” “Yes, certainly.” She led the way out of the kitchen, and proceeded by some back stairs, which George had very often ascended, towards Father Clarke’s room.

She opened the door softly. George observed a curtain, and that there was light behind it. The woman dropped on her knees immediately inside the door, and softly said, “From the depths I have cried unto Thee: Lord, hear my voice!”

George, scarcely knowing what he did, had knelt down; and now he answered her: "Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication!" And so in the dim light, in whispering voices, on their knees, they said the *De profundis*. Then the woman rose up and passed on. She put aside the curtain, and stood still. Like a man in a dream, George followed her. There was Father Clarke; but he was never more to comfort or teach George Thornton: he was lying dead. The steady light of the candles shewed his face so calm and sweetly still, that it looked as if he smiled; but he was never more to teach George Thornton; and the weary, sorrowful man, seeing this heavy grief added to his other trials, knelt down and wept like a little child.

Again the words of the holy priest rose to his mind—"If God should require her soul at your hands"—and with them mingled what that girl had said so lately, "I drink *now*, father!" And again George wept bitterly; but he also prayed with all his heart.





## CHAPTER VI.

### SORROW AND CHANGE.

EOERGE had not much time to spare. He saw Aunt Sally. He told her that Mary was returned, but did not speak a word of why she had come back; and he told her about Dorcas. She told Mrs. Travers, who bade him return home directly, and promised to send to Father Bernard without delay, and convey him to Freshfield. This relieved George; he was glad to go back. Father Bernard was at his house half an hour after his return, and Dorcas received the last sacraments.

There were severe returns of spitting of blood. The doctor said that she must die if she was excited. He did not know—perhaps no one knew—how the sight of her child wrung her pious soul with fear, and she was forbidden to speak. She could only pray for her beloved ones in her heart; and so praying, after a week's distress, she died.

We will stay our story for a moment, that we may consider Dorcas Thornton's case. Is she dying loaded with grief and trouble, a miserable mother and a worn-out wife? No; she is dying very differently. She has for many years been busy on a true Christian's work. She has not only been car-

rying her cross, but making it her means of sanctification. She has been earning through it a high place in heaven; she has been carving her crown out of it. She had seen the faults of her husband and child from the beginning, and with the quick feelings of a tender love she had gone through a sorrowful suffering on their account; yet out of all this sorrow her heart had learnt a holy lesson, and had found a daily sanctification. She had learnt to be severely quick in judging her own soul, and diligent in correcting her own faults. She was most earnest in prayer to God; and when she acknowledged the faults of others, she confessed her own, with the most ardent pleadings for mercy and grace.

When this humble soul saw that there was no improvement either in George or Mary, she took the trial as a punishment for her own sins. She became more than ever diligent to cure every bad inclination; and she pleaded her cause in prayer and at the sacrifice of the Mass with the most vivid recollection of what Jesus did for man when He suffered on the cross, and of how much He loved him. At last this woman lived in such a desire for the glory of God in the conversion and salvation of sinners, that it accompanied all her actions, and lived in all her thoughts; so that her whole life became like an offering of love to God. She had faith and humility, and in her heart the flame of divine love burnt steadily; and the Lord gave her, even in this world, a very great reward.

Dorcas saw her husband with a sincere will, and in the strength of the sacraments, begin to weed

from his heart the evil propensity to profane speaking and bad words.

It was a hard path for George to walk in. Dorcas knew how very hard the path must be, and yet she saw him keep in it. Father Clarke, who had guided her through her trial, now guided George in his struggle. She stood aside, as it were, and watched her husband's difficult steps, and admired the strength which he shewed—a strength which came by grace, which was purchased on Calvary. It was a strength of which Dorcas well knew the power. She knew that it still lived in the Church as strong, as fresh, as abundant as ever; that the Sacrifice was renewed on every altar at every Mass, and its merits applied in every confessional to every sincere and repentant soul. She watched her husband, and confessing her own unworthiness, adored God.

George was what the world calls a strong man. He was powerful in body and powerful in will, and yet he had lived as the mean slave of one sin. He could do almost any thing which this world admires. He had perseverance to get over difficulties, and generosity to forgive injuries, and pity to help the distressed; but of himself he had no power to help himself to get over the difficulties, the injury, and the distress that this sin brought upon his soul. In the eyes of the world he was powerful and strong; in the eye of the Church he was a pitiable slave. And happily in his conscience George had always known this; and at last he determined to fight the fight, and conquer in the name of the Lord.

He prayed hard for the gift of perseverance. He went to confession with the firmest determination to amend that he had ever made, and he told it all to Father Clarke. There, on his knees, he consecrated all the good powers that God had given him to the great end of curing his soul. He determined to correspond with God's grace with all his might; he took every sentence Father Clarke spoke as a message from God, and set his mind to follow his instructions in the spirit of a little child.

And now the flight from sin was begun in earnest; and the particular sin to be first cured was *the abuse of the gift of speech*, bad words. Man's tongue was given him to praise his Maker; he would try never again to use it to a wrong purpose.

Every morning when George got up from sleep he added a renewal of his resolution to his prayers. He looked at that picture of the Sacred Heart, and thought of his Saviour's love. He said, "*Holy and terrible is His name; I will try never again to speak it without reverence.*" Then he made the sign of the cross, and still fixing his thoughts on the unutterable love of the Sacred Heart, he said a short prayer which Father Clarke had given him: "Place, O Lord, a watch over my lips, that I may unlearn the most evil habit of swearing." And so the good work was begun.

But in his heart George expected punishment for the sin he had so long continued in; and he feared lest that punishment should come through his child. Her words—"I drink now, father"—had seemed to drop into his heart like burning fire. That sore and self-accusing heart had no reproaches in it for his daughter. No; he only reproached

himself; and even when he saw his wife on her death-bed, he had no other thought than that he was justly punished.

And once his heart seemed to say,—“Punished? Punished for what?” And that heart answered itself,—“Punished for a sin that I have persisted in calling *nothing*, and of which I have always said that *I meant nothing by it*.”

So George learnt the greatness of his sin in the severity of its punishment; but he had another way of learning its strength—he learnt it in the efforts it cost him to leave it off. Time after time he fell; then he went on well for a week, and then fell again, as it seemed to him, worse than ever. Then he was tempted to be disheartened—tempted to think again that it was *nothing*; that it was not worth so much trouble to leave off so common a vice. But his conscience was alive, and his good angel’s whispers were heard; his patron saints and MARY OUR MOTHER prayed, and *with them*, and *to them*, Father Clarke. Again and again George took courage; again and again he poured forth the story of his short-comings at confession; again and again Father Clarke thanked God for a soul steadily aspiring to greater holiness; and again and again that soul went away strengthened and refreshed, and able to begin again its combat with sin, and looking forward to its victory. And so, after many months of perseverance, George became one of those who hunger and thirst after holiness, whom God has pronounced *blessed*, and of whom He has promised that they shall have their fill.

It was about a week after the funeral. Mary had got ready her father’s supper, and he was seated

sad enough, looking at the fire, and thinking of her who had so long been seen beside it. Mary spoke; and there was something so strange in her voice, that her father started when he heard it.

"Father, don't be vexed or sorrowful. I love you, and you love me; and I don't want to make you unhappy—not more so than you are, and long must be. But I have got that on my mind which I must say, and I can't be contradicted; I must have my way in it, father."

"Speak on, my child. I am sure that secrets would make me unhappy; so whatever you have to say, say it."

"I can't live here, father!" George started. "I can't live here,—I can't live with you. Not because I don't love you, for I love you dearly; but it don't suit me, and I can't make it suit me."

"Dull—dull for one so young," said George.

"No," said Mary, "not dull, nor am I young. I am not eighteen quite in years, but I am old in feeling. I must have bustle, I must have the world; I can't live here. The reason of it all lies a good way back. My mind began to grow coarse very young, when first I learnt to speak bad words—that I am sure was the beginning of all I now feel. People say that this is a beautiful place, and so it is; if I had not lost my gentleness, I should like it very much, no doubt. But there is no use in hiding it, father, I am not like the dear, tender, faithful one, who is gone to the God she loved; I am of a harder, coarser sort; or I have grown hard and coarse; I suppose I was not born so. People say that there is music in the flowing of the river and in the humming of the

bees, and that it is peaceful to look at the flowers in the sunshine, so bright and gay, and so silent and sweet; but there is *that* in these things that I can't bear. It is as if there was a noise in my heart, father, and I feel that I must go where the bustle and turmoil of life shall drown it. Father, I shall never leave off my bad habits entirely. They are, both of them, like the necessities of life to me—the restraint I must put myself under for their cure would kill me. I hope never to swear or to drink *badly* any more; but here, in this quiet, pretty spot, every thing that is beautiful seems to bear witness against me, and so I can't live here ; I must go away!"

"Where do you want to go?" said George.

"I was thinking of getting work at the factory at Farley, and lodging with Aunt Milly Dawson."

"You must go where you like; I will make no objection. But mind this, you will never go from your father's heart. I shall always love you best of every thing upon earth. And don't say that you must always swear and drink. *I swore* for five and forty years; and though at times I went to the sacraments, the swearing and bad words went on as a habit. Now, I tried with all my heart to leave off that habit, I tried for the love of my wife, and for the love of you, but I couldn't do it ; and I comforted myself with thinking that no great harm would come from it. But harm did come. My bad habit became your temptation. All the harm that you described as having come to you, has come to you through me. I know it very well. But I have left off swearing and bad words now—I do believe that I have. And it was no earthly

love did it, Mary. It all came through Father Clarke leading me to think upon the love of that Heart of Love which gave its blood for our salvation."

"I won't lose my soul, father," said Mary; "but I don't feel as if I should ever again get so high up in religion as to be able to call the blessed Virgin '*mother*.' Children are like their parents; I—drinking and using bad words—am not like her. I can pray to her as the greatest of the saints; but I can't call her *mother* now. I took some old wild flowers out of mother's box yesterday, they had been white once; I feel sure that they were some which I picked myself as a child by the river's bank for our bed-room altar. I couldn't but cry, not so much to think of her having kept them, as at the thought of what I was in those days; I used to say that I had two mothers then, and that one was the mother of all true Christians, and that you had called me after her. I wish that I had died then."

George Thornton did not answer his child. He was looking across the room at that picture of the Sacred Heart, and calling on her whose flesh the Saviour took.

Mary kept to her resolution; and so George looked out for a decent person as his housekeeper. A woman with a crippled daughter was thankful to do all his work for such wages as he could afford to give, and Mary got employment in a large factory and lodged with Milly Dawson.

The change immediately did Mary good. She was fond of Milly, and fond of Aunt Sally at Farley Park. Mrs. Travers and Miss Mildred took

notice of her, and she felt once more raised to her place in society. She was a little looked up to, too, as a person who had lived in grand service, and seen London; and Mary never told any one how much harm her knowledge of life had done her. She began to go to her duties.

Mary had what is called a good disposition. But she formed herself too easily by the examples that were around her. She did not first try them by the teaching of the Church, and so convince herself of their being proper examples; but whatever they were, she was too easy in following them.

It happened that Milly Dawson's children were good Catholics, and did their duty to God and their own souls diligently. Mary, while one of them, found it tolerably easy to do as they did, and the whole winter passed away, and no one in that house ever suspected her faults; they were quite delighted with her. And James, who had loved her all his life, asked her to marry him, and she said "Yes" with all her heart.

George was so thankful when he heard of his daughter's engagement. He felt that she was cured of her evil habits. And when, after a time had passed, he found by conversations with her that she loved James truly and deeply, his own old spirits revived, and he was a happy man.

But Mary had not gone through all her trials yet. She had never gone to religion to cure her of her bad habits, and so they were only like things put to sleep, they were not dead. They might wake up again any day, and they did wake up; Mary was tempted, and they returned.

The weather grew warm. The room in the factory was very close. Girls, not fit to be Mary's examples, were near her, and they drank spirits and water. Mary had some too, a very little at first, but yet day by day a little and a little more.

Then came another temptation. Some girls, who had not a Catholic's right and solemn views of the sacrament of matrimony, joked Mary more than she liked about James Dawson. It was difficult, almost impossible to stop them; it was very hard to bear it; Mary lost patience, answered rudely, passionately, coarsely; so bad words and drinking were indulged in over again.

It went on for some time, and nobody spoke about it. The old miserable feelings came back to Mary. She got ashamed to call the blessed Virgin mother; she hated herself, and wished she had died when she was a happy child. Then she began to make excuses about going to the sacraments. One put-off led to another put-off; and yet sometimes, when she thought of James's love for her, she would be sorry, and determined to amend, and she would cleanse her soul in the confessional, and try to begin life again. But again temptation would come, and the earthly love was not strong enough to keep her right!

At last James was told of Mary's faults. He could not believe what he heard; but he heard it again and again; and at last he did believe. It almost broke the young man's heart. Month after month went on; every body remarked James's pale face and sorrowful look. Some said the work at the bank did not suit him, that he wanted the pure fresh air and the summer breeze.

But all that James wanted was a holy heart and holy habits in the woman he had so long, so tenderly loved.

At last Mary guessed by her lover's manner that he knew of her faults. She knew in her heart that no earthly thing could trouble him so deeply except herself. She never doubted his love; and in the midst of her bad habits she continued to love him with all her heart.

She resolved and resolved for her own sake—for James's sake ; but all was of no use. When the temptation came, it prevailed again.

One evening she was sitting alone in Milly's little parlour doing some needle-work. James came in. He looked very pale. He sat down by her side. After a short pause he spoke to her :

“ Mary, my heart is broken, I think. I don't ever expect to know much earthly happiness again ; but I cannot go into greater misery with my eyes open. Mary, I have made up my mind. None of our family know it. I shall go to America ; I have given notice at the bank ; I am going to sail next week. I must tell mother to-night ; and, Mary, I must go *alone*. You know why, Mary.”

Mary could not speak. She felt as if all the warm blood in her veins was turning into cold, hard ice. There she sat, holding her work, and feeling as if she was growing stiff with it in her hand, so great was her misery.

In the midst of it all she knew that James was right. She knew that a holy young man like him *ought not* to marry a wife addicted to drinking and

bad words. She tried with all her might to speak freely, but she could not. At last she got power to say a few words. Her voice sounded cold and heartless. "I wish you well, James," was all she said.

She saw that he shuddered; she saw that he turned aside his head to hide his emotion; but she could not say any more; the room seemed running round, all her effort was not to faint.

He held out his hand; she put hers into it. She wished that her hand could have felt less dead. He looked at it for a moment, kissed it once, put it back on her knee, and then rose up.

"If possible, Mary, I would not see you again," he said.

"I am going to my father's, at Freshfield, for a week," she answered.

"Then, good bye,—good bye for ever, Mary—I shall never see you upon earth again;" and James left the room quickly.

Mary was so ill, so miserable, that she did not dare think of what had happened. "If I think of it, I shall die," she said to herself, "and I have got to walk to Freshfield."

In the course of half an hour she might have been seen walking as fast as she could step, with a small bundle in her hand, towards her father's house. She told her father of her trial, of how James had left her, and *why* he had left her. Her father's sorrow was scarcely less than her own; but Mary's temper had taken a proud turn now; she would not own herself miserable, she persisted in saying that *she didn't care!* A greater falsehood could not have passed her lips, and her father felt

that it was false ; but still she laughed, and said she didn't care. Then she went a step further, and said that James was too much of a saint for her ; that there were dozens of young men in Farley, any one of whom would suit her better than James ; and so she braved it out, and lied every day, and all days of the week she spent at home ; and when she got back to Farley, James was gone, — he had actually sailed.

One thing Mary could not do, she could not live any longer at Milly Dawson's. She took lodgings in another part of the town with some Protestants. She got into bad company ; she was not always seen at Mass ; when the Dawsons spoke to her of her faults, she laughed at them ; and Milly Dawson forbade her girls to walk with Mary. Sally sent for George to come to Farley Park. There she and Mrs. Travers spoke to him about Mary, and besought him to take her home. He went to see her, and was received affectionately. But she would not go home ; she said she was very happy ; laughed at the idea of Aunt Sally being anxious ; said she shouldn't go wrong, but that she chose to be independent, and should not feel obliged to people who meddled with her.

George took this sorely to heart. " My fault, my fault," he used to say. He never blamed Mary, he grieved over her ; but when he blamed, he blamed himself.

He always saw Mary on Sundays ; either at Mass or at her lodgings he always saw her. And to these meetings he looked forward from week to week with an indescribable anxiety, and even dread ; yet he would have walked five times the

'distance rather than miss seeing her that one day in the week.

Sadly enough, however, there came a Sunday when George could not see his daughter. She was not at Mass, she was not at her lodgings; she had left them: they did not know where she had gone to live. The day was passed in a melancholy, fruitless search.

A week passed. Sally used every exertion to find Mary; so did Milly Dawson: no one was idle, no one was cold-hearted in the work; but Mary was not found. Another week came, and George had a note from Mary, dated from a large town called Newton, where there were several large manufactories, but no priest or chapel: it was full sixteen miles from Farley. George answered the letter, by entreating Mary to return to him, or at least to go where she could practise her religion.

Mary answered, that she was not going to leave her religion; but if there was no priest or chapel at Newton, she could not help that, and ought not to be blamed for it. She had left Farley because she could not be happy there. She had not liked the coldness of the Dawsons towards her; and to her father, she said she did not mind confessing that, notwithstanding all the spirit she had shewn, she had been a good deal cut up about James. For, after all, she was no worse than other people; if she did take spirits now and then, it was because she wanted it; and as to her bad words, it was nothing more than a trick, and she had always regretted it.

There was no comfort to George in this letter.

He knew the folly of those excuses very well. It was his own old story come back to him by his daughter's mouth. He had, by God's blessing, come to amendment himself; but he could not amend her—there lay the sting. He had been her first tempter; and all that had happened to her had come through him.

Months passed away, letters from Mary got fewer and fewer, and at last stopped entirely. George waited, but no letter came; he wrote, but received no answer; he went to Farley, no one had heard any thing of her; he went on to Newton. He had never been to Newton in his life. As soon as he got there, he went to the house from which Mary had last dated—*last dated!* because he now observed, with great distress, that her two last letters were not dated at all. The woman of the house looked surprised at Mary's being inquired for there; she had not lived there for full four months. She directed George to a house she had gone to when she left there. He went; but they knew nothing of Mary—she had only been a day or two with them. George went to the factory where she had said that she worked. It was true that some time before such a person had worked there; but they then knew nothing of her. And so from place to place her father went, trying to trace her; but she was not to be found.

There were no tears in George's eyes, no lamentations on his lips; he was full of a grief too great for words, and there was a work to be done too severe to allow of his sitting down in sorrow. Some one had said that she was going to London;

others thought that she had looked ill ; some one else had heard that she had talked of service. Any word that he could hear of her was stored up as a clue by which possibly she might be found at last.

Of course all was known to Aunt Sally, and to Mrs. Travers, and to Father Bernard. And in the town of Farley there was not a Catholic heart that did not sorrow with George, and that did not strive to help him.

Mr. Gervys arrived at Farley Park : he, too, was told ; he was very much distressed. He had always felt a great interest in George Thornton ; he had known him in his sin and his repentance ; he had seen him conquer and had seen him suffer ; and now, when he found so great a sorrow upon him, he could not but admire the spirit that strove so hard, yet would not blame the girl as severely as he blamed himself.

Mr. Gervys joined in the exertions to find Mary ; but still no account of her could be got. He went back to Castle Gervys for a day or two. He told his aunt all that had happened. He thought it not impossible that Mary might wander there if she got into distress, as they had now known her many years. Then Mr. Gervys returned to Farley Park.

Had they heard of Mary ? No ! And is there nothing doing ? What does he hear ? Of continued inquiries ? Yes ! Nothing more ? He hears of Father Bernard—of prayers and masses ; he hears of the chapel being open daily for confessions ; he hears of large numbers of communicants at every Mass ; he hears of a nine-days'

prayer, and he asks who joins in it ; he is told that full two-thirds of the Catholics of Farley join in it, and that it is all for Mary !

He thinks it beautiful — wonderful ! but he cannot understand it ; for the first time in his life he seems to have met with SINCERITY.

Again he asks some one, " And do you think that this will do Mary good ? " And he is answered, " Yes :" and is told further, that God, who always gives more than man deserves, has already blessed it to themselves ; and that some among them who had neglected religion had already returned to their duties.

Again he asks, " Who join in these prayers ? " and he is answered more particularly that the members of the " living Rosary," and those of the association for the teaching of Christian doctrine, join the prayers ; and also—and on hearing this, Mr. Gervys starts with surprise and something like pain,—and also those who pray for the conversion of England join the novena for Mary Thornton.

" And all this is to do Mary good," exclaimed Mr. Gervys. " And God is thus honoured, not only by the educated, by the rich and independent, by persons who have plenty of time at their disposal, but by those who are rich in religious knowledge and are clothed with the love of God ; by the poor and mean in the world's eye, and by those whom the world calls ignorant ; by those who have no other education than that which they have gained without money, without schools, without books, without leisure,—with only the will to serve God, and to be what He wishes them to be,

with only *that* which is in itself all things—the Church of Christ."

And yet to Mr. Gervys the most wonderful thing of all was, that they *believed* that prayer would help Mary Thornton. "Surely," said Mr. Gervys, "this is the true Church; surely I shall sin if I stay out of it. Truly it has the gift of faith."

The evening of the last day of the Novena came. George Thornton stood at his cottage-door, and looked at a sky bright and fiercely coloured, and saw the threatenings of a storm. He was going to walk to Farley, and afterwards to Farley Park, because there was to be Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament that night.

He could hear nothing of Mary. He could not see his friends at Farley without some slight hope that their inquiries had been successful; but they could give no comfort. He had left the town, on his way to Farley Park, when he met Mr. Gervys. They spoke together about Mary. George felt that there was something very pleasant and affectionate in Mr. Gervys's manner; he said that he would return to the house—that he had felt some drops of rain: they walked back together. It was a walk they neither of them ever forgot. Mr. Gervys said that George would encounter a severe storm before he got back. George thought it would come quickly, and added, "I came here to meet our Help to-night in chapel; vain is the help of man, Mr. Gervys; and this night, when I meet my Saviour in the Blessed Sacrament, I shall feel like the ruler whose child was near to death. I

have been thinking of it all day; ‘Lord, come down before that my child die.’”

“And have you such faith?” asked Mr. Gervys, as he walked on quickly to keep pace with the firm steady stride of that sad earnest man,—“have you so much faith?”

“It is the same God; it is the same Jesus. The same Who healed the sick, made the blind see, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk; Who raised the dead, Who forgave sins, Who spoke to men and made them follow Him; the same Who died because His love would redeem us; the same Who formed the Church, and made known His will to it; the same Who sent the Holy Ghost upon the apostles and His priests, that His words, ‘Thy sins are forgiven thee,’ might never be lost upon earth; that we might feed on Him in the Blessed Sacrament, and live for ever. It is the same—it is the same; it is He Himself. Why should I not believe? ‘Lord, come down before that my child die.’ Oh, Mr. Gervys, all that I want is that man’s faith.”

But Mr. Gervys did not think that George wanted faith. He was struck to the heart by what he said, and he cried out, “O Lord, give me faith; I wish I could believe. Give me such faith as this man’s by my side, and I will serve Thee for ever! For *such* a knowledge of Thee, *such* a faith in Thee upon the altar, I would give up all that I have.”

Not a word more could be said; for a black cloud gathered over them, and thunder came, and fierce lightnings flashed, and then a wild wind and

a deluge of rain. They stood for some minutes defenceless in an open field ; but the storm could not take the father's thoughts from his child ; it only made him say, " O Mary, Mary, where are you now ?" And not a thousand storms could at that moment have drawn off Mr. Gervys's soul from the contemplation of the treasure of faith. He prayed then as he stood, " Lord, I believe ; help Thou my unbelief."

The storm ceased suddenly ; in the hush they heard the sound of a church-bell, and they knew that they must hasten. They entered the church, and knelt down together. Thoughts came to Mr. Gervys ; they came, as if from the dead, from Father Clarke. He pitied, he loved, he honoured the man by his side. He had once dared to judge George for his sin, but now he struck his breast and judged himself. Father Clarke's words had come true ; this man, because he was of the Church, had taught him ; and he thanked God for the good he had learnt. They knelt down together, and both worshipped God : George, with the strong adoring faith of one who had never known a doubt ; Mr. Gervys, with the trembling fearful faith of one who scarcely dared believe. But when Mr. Gervys rose from his knees, he no longer wondered that so many persons should certainly believe that prayer would help Mary.



## CHAPTER VII.

### THE INWARD VOICE.

**M**HERE was Mary? She had gone from Farley to Newton, and she had never left Newton. Pride had taken her from Farley. She had scorned advice, and she had scorned example. But pride is a coward, though it speaks so loud. Mary could not live in the cold world that she had made for herself, and so she had fled away. She had gone to Newton because she was sure of work there; it was a very large town, and very full of people, and had several factories; she could easily get work there, and she determined to go and be independent. She knew that at Newton there was neither priest nor chapel; but she had grown wilful as well as proud, and so she went.

Her father had gone to look for her in the first lodgings she had taken. She had left them because they were too expensive. She had gone for a month into other lodgings; and at the end of that time she had left them, because she did not like the sort of people who lodged there with her. She went into other lodgings; but the situation was not healthy; and Mary, already worn by the

torment of her own mind, grew ill. Still she was able to work, but her strength failed every day. The woman who was mistress of the house, on receiving her money at the end of a week, asked about her health, not from any motive of kindness, but with the intention to get rid of her if she was likely to be sickly.

Mary told her how ill she felt ; said, perhaps unfortunately, that she doubted her ability to work the next week ; the woman was alarmed, and turned her out of her lodgings.

She was in great trouble. She was refused at several places. At last she was taken in at a house of inferior respectability ; there Mary ceased to write to her father. A few days of rest did her good : she went to work again, and was regular at the factory for a fortnight. She longed to get into a better place, for she was miserable where she was ; but she owed money there, and though it was very little, she knew that she must stay till she could pay it.

There were several girls lodging in this house,—wild, riotous, untaught girls. Mary, who had known better—who still knew better—often felt as if her heart grew cold when they talked to her. The old woman who kept the house was a person such as Mary had never known or seen before : she could not tell why, but she always felt a sort of fear of her.

Mary was considered very steady and very stiff by her companions. Their utter thoughtlessness quite kept this poor Catholic girl in awe. Erring and sinning as she was, in thus keeping from the Sacraments, and withdrawing herself from her

friends, she felt her danger, and knew she had done wrong. And wicked as it was to let her pride keep her in this evil way, there was yet a sorrow at her heart for which pride was no cure.

She was like a person walking on the edge of a precipice. She walked steadily, and looked neither to the right nor to the left ; though she knew that this way led to destruction, she had not the courage to turn back ; but she was very unhappy. She longed to get better and stronger, and to be able to pay the trifles she still continued to owe ; then she thought that she would get into a quieter lodging, and write again to her father. But Mary's bodily powers became weaker, and her heart grew sick. She told a little of what she felt to the persons around her, and got laughed at. She was told that she was too soft-hearted, that she must put a bold face upon things, and she would soon grow hard if she tried. She felt that she was going upon the downward path; her sick heart trembled and feared, and she hated herself ; but she had left all—even private prayers now—she could not turn back.

Mary grew very ill. She was confined to her bed for three weeks, and during part of that time she had been out of her mind. Her illness was a frightful fever. She had been nursed kindly enough; and after three weeks she was able to crawl down stairs, and sit or stand by the door for a little fresh air.

She had had medicine from a druggist. He was a kind-hearted man. He sent her puddings and nourishing soup when she was able to bear it. At the end of five weeks Mary went for a day to

the factory again; but it was too much for her, and she was obliged to make up her mind to take a longer holiday.

Now the want of money pressed her sorely. She had sold a few little trinkets, some books, a work-box, and a writing-desk ; all the little luxuries were gone, but she owed for three weeks' lodging and washing ; and when the old woman found that Mary could not yet do work, she was very harsh and angry.

An evening came—an evening which had been dreaded by Mary. The girls in the house were going to give a party. No words can tell how Mary dreaded it. During her separation from her friends, she had never gone to a play, a dance, or a concert. She had still upon her that dread of the rude Protestant world, which is a holy thing. She knew that she couldn't leave, and she could not bear to stay ; there rose up in her mind a dread of temptation ; she did not know why it came ; but she felt her own weakness, she knew that she had gone from bad to worse, and in the midst of her fear she wept because she had kept away from her religion.

" If I could go back to what I was once !" she said to herself ; but they were useless words, so she stood and cried.

She stood at the window bending over a dusty great geranium, which served the room for a blind. She pretended to clean and comfort it by pouring small quantities of water on the dirt-coated leaves ; for the love of nature's brightness was strong upon her after her illness, stronger than ever.

Some of the lodgers were in the room work-

ing upon finery which they intended to wear that night, and the old woman herself was sitting by the fire where the kettle was boiling for tea. Mary knew that they were talking *to* her and *of* her, but she could hardly be said to hear them. Her mind was still at its sorrowful work of self-reproach. She felt as if evil influences were around her, and as if she was *obliged* to stay among them. And what was worse, she felt as if she should never be able to get away. Sorrow, sickness, and debt were weighing her down, and she wept bitterly. No one saw her misery; her silent tears fell on the dusty geranium, which could tell no tales.

And yet Mary felt, as she stood so still, as if, in the atmosphere about her, there was a battle fighting, and fighting for her. "Where is my guardian angel, where is my patron saint? Though I cannot pray, my heart is not all turned from God; is there no one to pray for me now that I cannot pray for myself; I want help, is there no one to help me?" And then she wept again more bitterly than before.

Did she think of going back to her loving father's house by the Freshfield river? No, she could not bear to think of going there. Did she think of going to Farley, to Milly Dawson, who had loved her as a daughter? No, she could not go there. Did she think of throwing herself upon Aunt Sally's love? No, she could not walk to Farley. She thought of it, but it was sixteen miles off, and she had no money to pay for a conveyance; and besides, she could only think of her friends as persons whom she had disgraced; at that mo-

ment the thought of their love only made her trial more.

Something was said in a loud voice to attract Mary's attention ; she turned round quickly. It was repeated, and she replied, " I know, I know ; I have no money, no friends, no health. Come, dame, I must have some tea, however. I shall get on by and by ; don't be miserable ; I shall pay before I die."

She laughed ; it was an unnatural laugh ; but she did not want them to know she had been crying. She had made a resolution, and already her weak limbs seemed strong, and her lately trembling frame felt vigorous. They sat down to tea.

She ate heartily ; she knew that she was eating with even an unnatural appetite, and she glanced from time to time at her companions, to know if they observed her.

Then Mary rose up. " I am going upstairs. I shall be down again directly. I don't feel tired to-night, and I think a breath of air will do me good."

Mary went upstairs. Her resolution was still strong. She opened the box which contained her property, it was all in clothes ; she tied up a small bundle ; one pair of shoes and a change of linen was in it. Then she made up all that was left into another bundle, and it was a large one. As soon as she had tied on her bonnet and wrapped a shawl round her, she thrust both bundles through the window, and they dropped softly on the road below. Then Mary ran quickly down stairs, and out of the house. She picked up her bundles, and walked as fast as she was able towards more open

parts of the town, where the streets were wide and the shops large. She kept as much in the shadow as she could, but still walked fast, without attempting to conceal what she carried; and so she passed on without attracting any particular attention.

She went straight to a pawnbroker's shop, and opening the larger bundle, asked for money upon it. A worldly wisdom beyond her years had come upon her, and she bargained skilfully with the man who attended to her, and got the largest amount she could for the clothes.

With the money in her hand, she went as quickly as possible to the druggist's shop, to the man who had been so kind to her; she was determined that his merciful heart should not suffer the pain of thinking her ungrateful. The shop was lighted up with gas, and very bright. She felt dazzled, and looked ill and confused as she entered. The man knew her. " You are not strong enough to be about so late," he said. " What do you want?" He looked at her earnestly.

Mary felt confused by his gaze. " The light is too strong for me," she said, shading her eyes; " my sight has been weak since the fever."

" You had better go home," said the man quietly.

Mary shuddered. Home! Had she any home?

" I want to pay my bill," she said. " Look here, sir," she added, gaining courage. " You will oblige me much by taking part of your money now that I have got it to give you. I shall be very glad if you will take this much now, and trust me for the rest. I will pay you when I can—as soon as ever I can, sir."

Still the kind-hearted man looked fixedly at Mary. "Are you sure that you wish to pay this now? I am not in a hurry. Keep your money longer if you like."

"I would rather pay it now. It will do me good to pay it now."

"You look like an honest girl," he said. "See, you will have seven shillings more to pay. There, I have made a note of it. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mary. She was leaving the shop, but the man called after her.

"Stay a moment. You don't regret paying this?"

"Oh, no, sir."

"Then I must give you something for ready money." The man smiled, and held out half-a-crown.

"Thank you, sir. May God remember it, sir." Mary took the money—all that she had in the world—and left the shop. She walked on. Quick motion was a relief to her. She had no resting-place. The sky and the earth were her only friends; they were all she had of home. Still the resolution was strong upon her.

But where was she going that night? She feared to stay in Newton; she might be known, and forced back to her lodgings. She was still weak and ill; people might say she was deranged, and take her back. She could not stay in the streets; she was too much afraid of being known to venture into a house. Besides, there was something at her heart she could not tell to any body; and the resolution was very strong. She dreaded lest her sickly look and wandering air should ex-

cite remark ; she dreaded being prevented from doing without delay what was settled in her mind. But where should she spend that night ? Every moment she grew more nervous and fearful ; every moment she felt more and more sure that she could not stay there.

She stopped by a lamp-post and looked at her half-crown. A determination was quickly come to. She entered an eating-shop, and asked for some slices of cold meat—for sixpennyworth. Then she went to a bread-shop, and bought a small loaf. She put both into her bundle. Then she walked on—not fast, but with a moderate activity, like one going on some business, not in a way to draw observation—she walked on.

The town was left behind her. It grew darker every moment. Mary knew nothing of the road ; it was not the road that led to Farley, but still she walked on.

People met her and passed her ; some said “ Good night,” others never spoke. At last it was too dark to see at all plainly. No more people passed her ; Mary felt quite alone, and at first she was glad of it.

It had been a gusty evening ; the sunset had been red and terrible ; rapidly moving clouds crossed the sky. The wind was high ; it came in sudden squalls, like the bursts of an angry spirit. It shook her as she stood in her lonely weakness ; she grasped the hedge-side, and sunk beneath its shelter till the impetuous blast had passed by. Then she rose and walked on, making what way she could through the gathering darkness and against the angry wind.

Hours passed on, and Mary was tired—so tired that she knew that she could not get much farther. She was frightened to think that fatigue had taken such hold of her. Where was she to shelter that night? She could not lie down by the roadside. She crept on till she came to a gate which led into a field of grass : there was a large stone placed against the gate. Mary could not open it ; but she climbed over, and her feet were on the turf. Most ardently she hoped that she might get safely through that night ; most ardently she hoped that the storm and the night-air might not kill her, for she had not recovered from her illness. She was very weak ; and a little might be her death, she knew.

She was really afraid. She threw her arms upward, and in the wretchedness of her heart mingled the voice of her lamentation with the wailing of the blast.

Suddenly a darkness fell upon the scene around her ; she could no longer trace the spreading out of the sloping field in which she stood ; she could no longer trace the giant outlines of the trees on the hedge that was nearest to her. She dropped her face upon her hands. The lightning flashed, and wrapped her in its light. It seemed to quiver and dance about her, and to leave her unwillingly : it passed away, and then she listened to the thunder, that, loud, booming, and rattling, pealed above her.

She was on her knees, and her heart was happier than it had been for many many days. She was acknowledging her sin : “ O God, from my childhood I never corrected myself. My first bad

habit made the seed from which all this harvest of evil has sprung. I have been a disgrace to thy Church !” And then came words—sweet words, which had not been said for months. They seemed to rise to her lips without effort : she did not try to recollect them. She did not think of the order in which she had said them once ; she did not think of how the prayer ended or begun. But the sweet words rose to her lips ; and with them came the thoughts, and hopes, and trusting heart of childhood ; for she was calling the Blessed Virgin her mother.

“ Mother most pure, Mother most chaste, Virgin most powerful, Virgin most merciful ; Health of the weak, Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted !”—she had scarcely uttered “ pray for me,” when she heard a sound. She listened : it came on the wind’s softened sigh, and it seemed to speak to her. She listened breathlessly : it came again. Her hands were pressed upon her side, as if to still the beating of her heart : it was the lowing of cattle, and came from a distant part of the field.

Mary sprung to her feet, seized her small bundle, and ran rapidly in the direction of the sound. She was soon out of breath ; but when she was obliged to stop she listened again, and again came the plaintive note. The moon, fighting its way through the stormy wilderness of clouds, gave out its pale light. Mary saw a building in the distance, towards which, with renewed energy, she bent her steps.

It was a hut built to shelter cows on stormy nights. The opening was on the sheltered side,

and when Mary gained it she saw two animals lying down quietly on a quantity of clean straw. Mary went in very boldly ; she felt that the cattle were her friends. She made a bed for herself in a corner of the hut—a bed of straw. The place was warm and sweet with the scented breath of the quiet beasts ; Mary felt that there was peace for a few hours. She lifted up her heart in the new-found spirit, the spirit of her earliest days, and then composed herself to rest. She had no fear ; she felt herself safe in the shelter of the Everlasting Arms ; for the resolution which had taken her from that bad home was still strong as ever in her heart. Slumber soft and sweet was soon upon her, and Mary was safe. The thunder roared, the lightning flashed, the wind struck against the frail building's side ; but Mary slept and was safe. It was the last day of the Novena ; it was the night of Benediction at Farley Park.





## CHAPTER VIII.

### HOME.

**H**E morning came, and Mary rose from her bed. She replaced the straw, so as not to lead to any observation. She stood at the door and looked out, thankful for the hours of rest she had passed, and glad to see the promise of bright weather in the sky. She unfolded her small stock of provisions, eat a part with appetite, and drank of a brook which the morning's light shewed her, and which ran close by.

All was still. No one was yet coming to the fields. The cows had not risen from their beds; so Mary guessed that the milking hour had not arrived. She bathed her face in the stream, and made her dress as neat as she could. She made her bundle into a small tidy shape, bade "Good by" to the reposing beasts, and walked forth again into the world. She went towards the gate by which she had entered the field. Rest and sleep had done her good ; the trust and hope and resolution of the hour of trial had not left her. She knew that seven miles from Newton there was a large manufacturing town called Grace-

church, and that there there were chapels and priests : she was going there. She thought she could walk as far as that ; and when she should reach it, she would go directly to the chapel and make her peace with God. Mary had never seen Gracechurch ; she had never seen either of the priests ; but that was nothing. She sought her God, and reconciliation with Him ; and there He was, and there He would speak by His servant's voice, and there she should be heard ; to Gracechurch, then, she would go that day, if she had life enough in her to get there. "And then," she said, "*then* I will write to my dear father, to Aunt Sally, and to Milly Dawson ; and I will tell my father that I can venture to ask to be taken home, and that I look forward with happiness to living there, for that I am forgiven by God."

Mary gained the road and walked on. She met parties of men going to work. She did not like to ask the way of any of them ; she was afraid of being questioned as to where she had come from, and where she had passed the night. She walked on, therefore, with a brisk steadiness, as if there was neither doubt nor difficulty in her mind.

She looked at the mile-stones ; she did not see the name of Gracechurch on them. She felt a little alarmed about the way; but as she knew that she had left Newton by the right road, she still walked on. When she came to other roads she felt sadly puzzled ; but having no reason for changing her course, she still walked on. It must have been ten o'clock before she met a person of whom she liked to inquire the way. Then she met a decent-looking woman with a young girl,

who looked like her daughter, walking by her side. Mary asked her the way to Gracechurch.

"Gracechurch ! why, where do you come from, my dear girl?"

"From Newton."

"You have had your back to Gracechurch for the last three miles. It must be ten miles from here, and it is only seven from Newton. Do you want to get there to-night ? You don't look able to walk ten miles, I'm sure."

"Oh, yes, I must get there to-night," said Mary ; but she was ready to cry. "I have no place to stay in, no friend to go to, between this and Gracechurch. I must get there to-night."

"You had better lose no time, then." So the woman directed Mary how to gain the turnpike-road.

After about an hour's walking, Mary found herself in a broad road, and read on the first milestone "Gracechurch, eight miles." It was a heart-breaking distance ; but there was but one thing to be done, so she walked on.

And so through the long day she walked on ; yet often sitting down by the roadside to rest, for her limbs ached, and she was sadly tired.

Once she asked to sit down within a cottage-door, where a young mother was playing with her baby, and there she slept. After above an hour she awoke ; the woman had made some tea for her ; she drank it in thankful haste, and departed.

It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. Mary was two miles from Gracechurch—she was walking very slowly. She was not only very tired, but her feet were swollen and blistered. They were tender after her illness ; and her shoes, made for

the factory floor, not for hard roads, and not being very new, had got worn and twisted, so that the sole cut the side of her foot, and her black woollen stocking was stiff with the blood that had come from the wounds. It seemed impossible to walk two miles in such a state. She was very lame, but still she limped on. She thought that she would take off her shoes, and wrap her throbbing feet in some of the clothes she had in her bundle. Any thing that might relieve her pain and enable her to hasten on would be a mercy to her. Yet she hesitated, from a feeling of shame. Then there came the sound of a fast-trotting horse. She took out her money, precious as it was to her ; she must ask for a lift, if this horse should be in any sort of carriage which could accommodate her. She stood still, and watched for the horse to come in sight. She was sad, for she heard no sound of wheels. Soon she saw a gentleman on horseback. "Ah!" she cried, "that's of no use to me."

Poor girl ! she tried to walk less lame, that she might not attract the observation of the horseman ; but she could hardly bear to stand. She looked at the hedgeside, longing to sit down ; but she had a feeling that if she sat down for one moment, she should not have either the courage or the strength to walk any more. While she was thinking, the gentleman passed by at a moderately fast pace. Mary did not look at him ; but in another moment she saw him stop his horse suddenly, and she heard him call her name — "Mary Thornton ! Mary ! is that Mary Thornton ?"

Now, truly, she was glad of that hedgeside. She was so nervous that she felt afraid without know-

ing why, and she shrunk away from the road, and sunk down on the grassy bank, and covering her face with her hands, burst into tears.

The gentleman was Mr. Gervys. He felt so glad, his heart swelled with joy, and he said a short prayer of thankfulness on the spot. He jumped off his horse, and leading the fine quiet animal, he stood by Mary's side.

"Oh, Mary," he said, "I am so glad, everybody will be so glad, that you are found. Where are you going?"

"To Gracechurch, sir.—But have they been miserable? I have, sir; indeed I have; but then I was in the wrong. Oh, Mr. Gervys, please to go on; I will go on when I am rested; please to go away, sir. I shall get to Gracechurch before long."

Mr. Gervys was looking at a shoe which had dropped on the ground. It was soiled with blood from her poor swollen foot. "What!" he said, "you get to Gracechurch? You *walk* to Gracechurch to-night? You can't, Mary; you can't do it. I must get you to some house where you can find shelter."

But Mary wept sorrowfully, and said, "No, no! only Gracechurch—only there, only there!"

"But why only there? You shall get there in a day or two, when you are fit to go there."

"No, sir, no. I must get there to-night. I never can be happy to stay away."

"Have you friends there?"

"Yes, sir."

"What are their names?"

"I don't know, sir."

" Oh, Mary, why should you deceive me?"

" Deceive you, Mr. Gervys! But, sir, you don't know. My friends there are God's priests. I want to cleanse my soul, I want to be forgiven, I want to meet my Saviour again, I want to eat of that bread and live for ever!— You don't understand, Mr. Gervys."

" I do understand," he answered, " for I am going to be a Catholic myself. I thank God that I am now convinced, and that my heart's desire is to be received into the Church."

Mary fixed her eyes upon him as he spoke; she felt delighted, thankful to hear such words; but at that moment the thoughts of her heart *would* come out.

" You convinced!" she said; " *you* long to be one of that fold which Jesus keeps? Ah, Mr. Gervys, *you* may wait, but *I* cannot. You have never yet known how good, how great, how glorious God is in His Church. You may wait, but I cannot. Indeed I must get to priest and chapel to-night, if I can do it, and live."

Mary's words, "*you may wait, but I cannot,*" were sounding in Mr. Gervys's ears. " And why should I wait?" he said; " why *do* I wait now that I am convinced?" And his heart answered itself. " Because I am so weak in faith. Surely I am still tempting God. How do I know that I shall live to see my aunt, and get back to Farley? I will *not* wait!"

" Mary, we will go together to Gracechurch, if it can be managed. I shall go to that small farmhouse which we see yonder, and try to get a conveyance for you."

Mr. Gervys could only get a donkey at the farm ; but a small boy offered to lead it, and so he brought them to the place where Mary was. She was mounted safely, and proceeded thankfully towards Gracechurch.

" I shall go on ; it is not far. I shall put up my horse at the inn, and walk back to meet you," said Mr. Gervys.

Mary thanked him ; and feeling happier than she had been for a long time, she chatted cheerfully to the little boy who walked by her side, and so entered the town of Gracechurch.

Just as the houses began, they met Mr. Gervys coming back. He took a parcel from his pocket, and opening it with a smile, he shewed a pair of soft easy shoes. Mary could hardly help crying at this little kindness. She was very glad of them for their own sake, and she contrived to put them on as she sat on the donkey. The child knew the way to the Catholic chapel, and promised to lead the donkey there. Mr. Gervys walked on the pavement at the side. Among the many people who thronged the streets, not one knew that that tired, pale, young girl on the donkey was known to the gentleman who was walking on with such a grave and thoughtful air ; and not one of the busy people of the world could have supposed how happy their hearts were— hers so full of love and gratitude, so willing in its return, so certain of its reception ; and his so full of wondering praise, because it had never before felt how God can love, and how man can adore Him.

And so they reached the Catholic chapel. Mr. Gervys paid the boy and sent him away. Mary

had gone straight to the altar of the Blessed Sacrament, and had there knelt down. Mr. Gervys asked a man standing in the porch where the priests lived, and he was answered "next door." He called upon them. He told his own story, and told as much of Mary's as he knew. He was asked to stay there a day or two, and he accepted the invitation.

Mary went to confession that night, and a respectable lodging was got for her near the chapel. The next morning she was at Communion. Mr. Gervys was at Mass; and when he saw her thankful humble face, he knew that she was happy, though many tears were on her cheeks. He asked her if she had written to her father.

"I wrote to him last night, and told him what a happy morning this was to be to me; and I humbly asked his pardon for the grief I had caused him, and I asked his leave to return home."

Mr. Gervys was received into the Church, and made a three-days' preparation for his first Communion. That great day came. Mr. Gervys remained in the chapel after Mass at his devotions. But when he entered the priests' sitting-room, there he saw George Thornton, and Mary by his side.

George took his dear daughter back to Freshfield. One thing they did before they left Gracechurch; they sent to the old woman with whom Mary had lodged the amount of all they owed: and a day or two after their return home, George went to Newton, and called on the druggist who had shewn so kind a heart. He thanked him for his goodness to his daughter, and paid the remainder of the bill.



## CHAPTER IX.

### ALL'S WELL.



WHOLE year passed on. Mary kept her father's house : not a fault could any one find with her. Every Sunday at Farley Park chapel they heard Mass ; they were constant at the Sacraments, and God gave them a peaceful life. George went on making steady wages ; and Mary put every penny to good account. They gave to the poor, and they put money by for the time of sickness, age, or trouble.

Milly Dawson's love for Mary all came back. She even begged her to forgive her if she had ever seemed unkindly cold. But Mary told Milly that there was nothing to forgive, that no one had been to blame but herself.

One day when Milly had been very happy with them at Freshfield, she said to Mary, " Before I go home, walk with me by the river's bank ; I have something to say to you."

'They went out together.

" Mary," said Milly, " we often hear from James now, and he asks after you."

Mary felt herself tremble.

" And I think, my dear Mary, that it would be worth his while to come back from America if you

would return there with him ; for he truly loved you, Mary."

" Has he said that himself ?" asked Mary. She tried to appear easy ; but it was as much as she could do to speak.

" No ; but I know enough of his heart to be sure that if I were to say one word to him, he would be over by the next ship. Shall I say that word to my dear good son, Mary ?"

Mary thought for a minute, and then said " No."

" Certainly no, Mary ?" asked Milly, almost crying.

" Certainly no, my dear Aunt Milly," answered Mary ; " and I'll tell you why. I keep father's house, and I am very happy, and doing my duty. Father loves me dearly, as I love him. I will never leave father. He has said to me, that if I like to marry, he should still like to have me with him ; and I will never part from father."

" Mary, are you quite, quite sure ?"

" Yes, quite sure."

" And there is nothing to say to James ?"

" No, nothing," answered Mary ; and she spoke quite firmly now.

So Milly went home, and took an early opportunity of talking to Aunt Sally ; and she said, with many sighs, that that would never be a match now, and that she was very sorry indeed. Aunt Sally did not contradict her ; she only said that there were good Catholic girls in America, and James could choose out of them. Milly thought Sally cold-hearted, and Mary cruel ; but she was not quite right in her opinions. At least, we can say that poor Mary cried herself to sleep that

night, and heartily renewed her sorrow for having offended God, and made a strong resolution to take the loss of that excellent young man as a penance for her sins.

Again a whole year passed away. More than one person asked Mary to marry ; but she had no wish to marry : they were quietly and firmly refused. But every body admired her ; and poor Milly Dawson, when she saw her growing more and more womanly, and improving every day, would wring her hands and shed a tear or two, to think that her dear son James could never have her for his wife.

But if Mary and James were never to marry, it was not so with Miss Mildred Travers and Mr. Gervys. They were going to be married, and the day was fixed. No one could be happier than old Aunt Sally. Some people said that it was a wonder to see a person of her years so happy about a wedding ; but Aunt Sally only smiled more sweetly than ever, and said that " Love never grew old. Old, indeed ! Did any body think that her love for her friends was a thing that could grow blind and deaf and lame and weak ? She would not own such love—not she."

Miss Mildred's birthday was kept the week before the wedding-day. It was an important day to George Thornton. He kept up the old habit of receiving the Sacraments on that day ; so he and Mary were in the chapel at Mass, and there also was Mr. Gervys. George looked at him with affection, and prayed for all blessings on the marriage that was to come so soon. After Mass George asked to see Aunt Sally as usual ; Aunt

Sally said that Mrs. Travers hoped they would spend that day at Farley Park in honour of Miss Mildred's birthday ; and "Mr. Gervys has got a present for Mary in honour of this day," said Sally ; "and I have seen the present, and I never saw any thing better worth having in all my life. But you can't see it till eleven o'clock ; so let us eat our breakfast comfortably in the mean time."

There was a good deal of talk about this present. Mary wanted to know what it was, and Sally was too faithful to tell. Mary said she longed for eleven o'clock ; and aunt was so happy and pleasant, that George said she grew younger and younger every year.

Eleven o'clock came, and they all jumped up. "You must come too, George ; she can't take gifts without your leave and approval." So Sally, Mary, and George went upstairs to a room called the breakfast-room. They heard Mr. Gervys's voice as they entered the room ; but when Mary opened her eyes upon what stood within, she burst out crying, and fell into her old aunt's arms, and said, "But I will never leave father. Oh, I never will !"

James Dawson stood in that room, and he said, "Mary, if you will marry me, you never need leave father. Mr. Gervys has got me a clerkship at the place where I worked before : only it is a very good one, Mary—it is 120*l.* a year. I have a very good knowledge of business now, and can earn it very well. I have had great advantages. I have been trusted to a large amount, and my religion made me trustworthy ; so I got on, from one place to another I got on, and I may do better yet.—But will you marry me, Mary ?"

"How did it all happen?" sobbed Mary, looking up in her old aunt's face with a happy smile, and letting James take her hand, though she could not bring herself to look at him.—"How did it happen?"

"Why, when you grew so pleasant and steady and holy, then Milly used to grieve for James; and she used to tell me, and I used to tell Mrs. Travers and Miss Mildred, and they told Mr. Gervys. So Mr. Gervys, always wanting to do some kindness to you, wrote to James and got this situation, and told him to come back. And we never told you, because no one could truly tell whether you had or had not forgotten him."

"Oh, no! oh, no! I never forgot you," said Mary, looking round at James, which made James very happy; and the marriage was settled.

Mary and James have now been married five years. They have two children—a boy and a girl—called George and Mary Dorcas. These children are looked upon by their parents as belonging to God, and in all their actions towards them they remember His will. They are careful not to give them scandal, and as far as possible keep them out of temptation. They put them under the protection of the perfect and powerful Virgin Mother, that they may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

George Thornton lives with his daughter. He has given up his trade, and employs himself on the land which is attached to James Dawson's house. They have a cow, and pigs, and a good

garden ; and they manage all among themselves. George is very tender to his daughter. He knows that once her soul trembled on the verge of destruction, and that all her danger grew out of the first fault that he had himself taught her. He lifts up his spirit often in these words—"Thank God for *her!*" He has a double meaning in his heart. He means to thank God for so dutiful a child, and to thank Him also for her soul,—for her soul, which will not now be required at his hands at the last awful judgment,—for her soul, which now loves God stedfastly, and offers up to Him the daily adoration of a holy life.

George is very fond of his grandchildren. He is quick to see their faults as well as their virtues; and if he ever detects a sound like a bad word from their innocent little lips, it makes him tremble; for one thing this man of years, and knowledge, and strength, and courage, *fears*—he fears the beginning of evil.

Often, when George Thornton is in the street, he sees children rushing about in romping play, and he hears from their young mouths bad words in dreadful abundance. He knows—his conscience tells him—that in their homes their fathers, and perhaps their mothers, swear and curse, and speak profanely in a thousand ways. He tries to stop them; he tries to say some word that they may remember one day. It is not often of any use; he knows that; but he goes on, never discouraged, still trying to say some word that may be remembered one day. For he knows that life and temptation are before these children, and he guesses what sort of life theirs will be.

"They are using the language of scoffing and reviling towards their Saviour, before they well know what they do, and their parents and masters teach them."

So says George Thornton as he passes on; and then he strikes his breast, and speaks again.

"And *I* once did this; *I*, a Catholic; *I*, a baptised member of the Church of Christ! I was a million times worse than these poor untaught things. God had chosen me for his own, and I was openly dishonouring Him; and God gave me a child, and I tempted her to dishonour Him even in the midst of His mercies, and before His face!"

And then George is struck with the horrible *boldness* of sin. He shuts his eyes, turning his thoughts inward, to rest on the picture he has called up in his mind, and he says, "*I wonder that I wasn't afraid!*"

Thus George lives, blessing the neighbourhood with his good example; making amends, as well as he can, for those years in which he dishonoured God so much. He is growing old; he thinks of death; and he thanks God with indescribable fervour, that he did not die when his heart was so cold towards his Saviour, so indifferent to his God, as to be always justifying sin, to be always saying of BAD WORDS, that "*he meant nothing by them.*"

THE END.







